

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 15

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

Boston Investors Purchase Retail Property on Avenue A



The north section of the Food City plaza changed hands in late December.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Two days before Christmas, a parcel of land on the corner of Avenue A and Seventh Street was purchased for \$550,000 by Boston-based real estate investors. The land includes, currently, the giant pile of snow whose longevity serves as the subject for an annual contest at the Carnegie Library, as well as a parking lot, a Family Dollar discount store, and an Aubuchon Hardware.

The new owners, officially known as 200 Avenue A LLC, are Marcel Sander, a Brookline-based businessman whose holdings include a number of commercial properties on both sides of the state, and his sons, Jacob and Joshua Sander.

“My brother and I want to follow in our dad’s footsteps,” Jacob Sander told the *Reporter* this week when reached for comment on the sale. “We both recently graduated college, and have been saving up a

lot of money since. This is our first official investment property – he’s helping us through some minor details, but for the most part my brother and I are managing it.”

Besides properties in Boston, Allston, Brighton, and Arlington mostly occupied by restaurants, the elder Sander is co-owner of the Agawam Towne Square plaza in Agawam and the former site of Lorenz Auto on Federal Street in Greenfield. Sander Greenfield LLC purchased the latter property in 2013 and signed a lease with Dollar General the same day; in 2017, a CarQuest Auto Parts moved in behind the discount store.

“We like investing in necessity retail,” Jacob Sander said. “All the properties in Western Mass have Dollar Generals, or a NAPA or CarQuest, or a hardware store – things that are insulated from an online presence that’s affecting most of the retail market right now.”

Sander said that while he and his brother currently live and work in

see **PROPERTY** page A3

Boards Unanimously Approve Airport Deal; Final Vote at Next Week’s Town Meeting

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – Both the Montague selectboard and the town finance committee have unanimously approved all ten articles on the warrant for the special town meeting on Thursday, February 25, including three dealing with the purchase by the Turners Falls airport of facilities formerly owned by a private company called Pioneer Aviation.

The February 25 “special” will be a virtual meeting, with town meeting members logging into the meeting itself via Zoom Webinar and voting through an application called vVote. Members are urged to log in half an hour early at 6 p.m. for the meeting. Two “practice sessions” are scheduled for February 18 and 20.

The warrant articles were all approved by the Montague capital improvements committee early in the day of February 3, and by the selectboard and fin com at a joint meeting that evening. The last three articles on the warrant concern the purchase

of, and upgrades to, the Pioneer Aviation properties.

The airport commission and superintendent Brian Camden have argued that the town’s purchase of the properties is essential if the town airport is to remain viable, since Pioneer provided crucial maintenance,

storage, fueling, and flight training for the airport.

Camden said he believes that there is a strong possibility that without the purchase, the property could be sold to a non-aviation company, seriously undermining the viability

see **AIRPORT** page A5



The Pioneer facilities include a hangar, warehouse space, and fueling station.

More Eligible for Vax, But Supply in Question

By JEFF SINGLETON

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker announced at a midday press conference Wednesday that as of this Thursday, February 18, the second group in “Phase 2” of the state’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout will be eligible to receive their first shots. This group includes all residents 65 and over, those with two or more medical conditions creating a serious risk, and “residents and staff of low income and affordable public and private senior housing.”

According to the Department of Health website this group includes over a million residents. But as of the *Reporter’s* deadline, vaccination centers in Franklin County did not appear to be accepting appointments for the newly eligible candidates, and it is not clear when sufficient vaccines will become available.

At the press conference, Baker stated that “unless we see a massive increase in shipments from the Feds, it will take us at least a month for people in these new groups to be able to book their first vaccine appointment.”

“Believe me, we all know that sounds like a long time,” the governor continued, “but the demand is so much greater than the supply we’re getting at this time. None of us thinks this program is moving fast enough,

see **VACCINE** page A7

GILL SELECTBOARD

Asbestos Concerns At Gill Elementary

By JERRI HIGGINS

Gill’s selectboard meeting was held Tuesday night due to the President’s Day holiday on Monday. Concerns about asbestos at the Gill Elementary School, expansion of COVID-19 vaccination sites, purchase approvals for the fire department, a safety grant, and the placement of unpaid sewer bills as liens on residents’ tax bills filled out the brief meeting agenda.

In an unplanned agenda item, Amber Flagg, a staff member and a parent of a student, joined the Zoom selectboard meeting to share her concerns about asbestos at Gill Elementary School. “I was wondering if anything had been started about the tiles in the school that have asbestos in them,” asked Flagg, “and if so, what is the plan for that?”

“It is a large amount of money to fix the asbestos problem, so it is going to have to be budgeted somehow, and that is about where we are at right now,” selectboard member Greg Snedeker told Flagg. According to Snedeker, the issue has to go through the capital improvements planning committee, which has “had it

see **GILL** page A7

PERSPECTIVES

Handling the Coronavirus at Tech

By CHARLOTTE VALLE

TURNERS FALLS – Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) has been open in a hybrid model since September. This has allowed for students to continue hands-on learning in both shop and academics while keeping themselves, along with their classmates and teachers, safe.

The hybrid model originally was created so that Freshmen and Juniors were in person on days that Sophomores and Seniors were online, and this would switch back and forth each day. Since then the model has changed so that the grouping of the grades stays the same, but the switch between who is in person and who is online happens every



FCTS has been using a hybrid learning model since September.

two weeks.

Those who are in person are required to follow strict guidelines, including keeping your mask above the nose and below the chin, unless outside during a mask break or eat-

ing, where in both cases each student must stay socially distanced from all others.

Each classroom has socially distanced work spaces, and many have

see **TECH** page A4

Weeds on a Beloved Pond Spawn Contentious Debate



Debate over herbicide use at Leverett Pond is the tip of the iceberg.

By SARAH ROBERTSON

LEVERETT – The Friends of Leverett Pond have submitted their latest plan to the town’s conservation commission to manage nuisance weeds on the public pond over the next three to five years.

In an effort to improve the pond’s ecology and recreational opportunities, the Friends of Leverett Pond (FLP) are proposing to use herbicides, hydro-raking, and mechanical harvesting to kill excessive plant life around the pond. A notice of intent (NOI) presented to the con com on February 1 outlines the strategies and justifications for the proposed management methods.

FLP president Tom Hankinson, who also serves on the Leverett selectboard, announced the group’s

plans on February 1 on the Leverett Connects listserv. His announcement prompted extensive debate. Use of chemicals on the pond has been controversial in Leverett, where “No Poison on Leverett Pond” bumper stickers can be spotted around the town. Some residents voiced concern over the use of herbicides and hydro-raking, and accused the FLP of tailoring its plan to serve recreational and private interests.

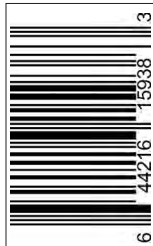
“It’s a multi-purpose project, and recreation is part of it, of course, but the health of the water body is also very important,” FLP member Mitchell Mulholland told the *Reporter*. “We have applied through the con com and the Department of Environmental Protection because they are the administrators of the

see **POND** page A8

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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Technical Administration

About Face Computing

Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

The Ice Storm

A weakened Gulf Stream has buckled, allowing the Earth's Arctic polar vortex to slip down as far south as Texas and destroy low-temp records. It's the latest layer built atop an ever-expanding pyramid of disasters we are suffering.

Free markets do not efficiently respond to emergencies; they efficiently strip fat from the system during normal times, leaving brittle structures of response. Texans already don't have snow tires, but that's the least of their problems.

Our social media are flooded with floods: sobbing Southerners by the thousands filming their collapsed roofs, the most available remaining way to reach out for help, or at least some sympathy and recognition.

Most of Texas is on its own electric grid, separate from the rest of the country. The state legislature is loath to regulate the wholesale energy market. The grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), checks the weather forecast, predicts electricity usage, and takes bids a day in advance.

The *Houston Chronicle* describes what went wrong: "ERCOT needed a little more than 70,000 megawatts of juice early Monday morning when the fossil fuel plants failed and took 30,000 megawatts off the grid. Wind came within 1 gigawatt of meeting its obligation and then wind and solar outperformed expectations during the day.

"The fossil fuel plants failed because they were not prepared for the cold. Texas could have relied on wind, but operators opted-out of buying cold-weather add-ons used in the Arctic. Texas electricity generators did not want to spend the money to build resilient equipment because it would cut into their profits."

When oil and gas peaking plants couldn't provide enough wattage to keep the grid charged, providers responded by implementing rolling blackouts. Supposedly. We'll be able to give a proper assessment in the aftermath, but in a number of cities, the *anecdotal* complaint is that richer neighborhoods tended to keep their power while poorer ones tended to lose it.

The outages have led to cascading effects: food shortages, carbon monoxide deaths, water boil notices, car crashes, and spiralling social chaos. We're not being dramatic: it's as if a manmade hurricane hit the Southern states, and they are going to need support.

Precisely because the situation looks so terrible for the fossil-fuel industry, its propaganda arm has pulled out all the stops, trying to kick the ball as far as possible into enemy territory at the beginning of the public debate.

Though the wide majority of Monday's failure can be attributed to fossil-fuel plants, Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson led a legion on pundits insisting that the fault lay with renewables.

"The Green New Deal has come, believe it or not, to the state of Texas," he told his audience. How's it working out so far?"

"The windmills froze, so the power grid failed," Carlson claimed. "There are huge natural gas deposits all over the state. Running out of energy in Texas is like starving to death at the grocery store: You can only do it on purpose, and Texas did."

Texas governor Greg Abbott went on Sean Hannity's show. "Our wind and our solar got shut down, and they were collectively more than 10% of our power grid," he explained. "And that thrust Texas into a situation where it was lacking power in a statewide basis."

Erm... What about that other 90%? According to ERCOT, 16 GW of renewables and 30 GW of traditional generation were offline. The underlying problem in both categories was with owners and investors opting to cut corners.

Even if the state's system were running 100% on bubbling crude — oil, that is: black gold; Texas tea — the grid would still be unprepared for increasingly frequent winter cold snaps that are an inevitable downstream effect of its emissions.

The US government holds a disproportionate amount of power over the direction of global energy usage and emissions. A minority of our residents hold a disproportionate amount of power over our government. (Witness our recent impeachment trial, in which senators representing 126 million defeated senators representing 202 million.)

And a handful of billionaires, entirely in bad faith, is waging information war to keep that empowered minority ensconced, not simply in an alternate value system, but in an alternate reality.

The wall can be broken, but not by argument — it requires direct, material aid and the experience of solidarity. We should all stand up for Texans suffering in this disaster, and help them break the spell.



Ann Fisk stands in the hallway at the Montague Center fire station, where she and three other volunteers have spent a week painting the walls. The station, built in 2003, got a new, two-tone paint job to cover up the original "institutional beige."

Letters to the Editors

Open Letter to Forty-Three Senators

Attached please find a letter I have written and will be sending through the mail on February 16 to the 43 US Senators who betrayed the trust given them by We The People. Each Senator will receive their own personalized copy, which I am sure they will ignore.

Feel free to print this and share it with your readers.

Paul DiStefano
Montague Center

Dear Senator Rob Portman,

Following your February 13 vote to acquit the felonious, appalling, former President of the United States for instigating a calamitous riot in the United States Capitol, I write this letter to you.

Your fealty to the United States of America is lacking and clearly does not use logical thinking.

Your fealty to a criminal, autocratic, draft-dodging liar is disgusting. It makes you appear criminal as well, Senator. You are now a co-conspirator in the rioting of January 6, 2021.

Are you proud that John McCain is not deemed a National Hero by your dear leader? "Ya gotta fight like hell;" right Senator Portman? Fight-boy dear-leader crawled back to his hole after his Proud Boys took flight to mug you, Senator; it must have been the bone spurs that kept that piece of garbage traitor home that day.

The US Senate is "The World's Greatest Deliberative Body?" Are you kidding me? It is more like "The World's Highest Paid Selfish

Millionaires Wanting More." You should donate some of your salary to a church. A Black Church. I probably make more charitable donations than you, based on income.

More so, you should resign for being an embarrassment to the United States Constitution, and for being an embarrassment to the framers of that document.

It is evident that your position and salary is a waste of taxpayer dollars, for you exhibit absolutely zero concern for the United States of America as a Democracy. Yes, Senator, it's a Republic as well; which means We The People have to trust you even more than in a straight up Democracy. You are an Authoritarian Rat Fink.

Senator Portman, you are an embarrassment to the rule of law. You are an embarrassment to the premise of civics. You are an embarrassment to the theory of patriotic duty. You fear a draft dodging, criminal serial rapist, who was once an elected official.

But mostly, you are soon to be

the photo in the dictionary adjacent to the textbook definition of "inept leadership." I will be forgotten when I die, but you will forever be remembered as a coward.

My guess is that like your fellow 43 co-conspirators, you did not pay attention during the second impeachment trial in your workplace. You ruled that I couldn't be allowed to observe your lack of attention, didn't you?

Senator Portman, you need to resign. You are a growing zit on an unwashed face. A zit that needs popping. Take care of your complexion, Senator, for it's starting to run like the makeup that your boy Matty Gaetz' adorns himself with. It is fake. It is ugly. It is you!

You exonerated through your acquittal the most heinous home-grown political criminal in United States history.

With no respect to you, Traitor Senator Portman; for you show no respect to the We The People.

Paul DiStefano

No Such Mill

In the Call for Art (February 11, "MoRe" section; pg. B4, a nicely rendered oil painting image titled "Turners Falls Mill" is offered.

I realize an artist may title their work as they so choose. However, in this instance, there is no mill location — that I'm aware of — in Turners Falls that resembles the painting.

My point for this communication is to let folks know that may not be familiar with the area, and might like to locate the scene ... this "Turners Falls Mill" location is fictitious.

With all due respect,

Ed Gregory
Greenfield

Published weekly on Thursdays.
*Every other week in July and August.
No paper fourth week of November,
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By NINA ROSSI

The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center presents an online panel of internationally known **artists whose work focuses on ocean pollution** this Thursday, February 18, at 7 p.m. Moderator and artist Andy Yoder will lead Alejandro Durán, Pam Longobardi, and Aurora Robson in a discussion of their work and the ways they draw inspiration from the crisis happening in our oceans, particularly around plastic trash. Register in advance for this free event at brattleboromuseum.org.

This Friday evening, join Hawks & Reed and CouchMusic. Live for a livestream concert featuring **ReBelle and Naia Kete and Imani**. The concert is part of a series honoring Black History Month called “Music Speaks: Amplifying Black Voices.” Join in this celebration of how Black music enriches our collective culture and community at 7 p.m. While it is not required that you pay in order to enjoy this event, the organizers encourage you to give what you can to support the artists, venue, and production crew.

ReBelle’s music is described as “a formidable musical force conceived in love, rebellion, and the evocative musical vigor of Emmanuel Manou and Kalpana Devi. Their eloquent musical composition runs along limbs of Rasta, elements of Jahzz and folk, poetic insurgence, and ardent rhythms.”

The Traprock Center for Peace & Justice is offering a **part-time paid internship** to help spread news and actions for a healthier future via Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, and beyond. Applicants will need their own computer and internet access, social media skills and, especially valued, a

passion for peace and climate, racial, gender, and economic justice.

The position starts March 15. Check out Traprock’s work and newsletter at www.traprock.org. Email Anna at traprockinfo@crocker.com for more information.

The Pioneer Valley Symphony is sponsoring an online, retrospective celebration of **western Mass composer Lewis Spratlan**, professor emeritus at Amherst College, this Saturday, February 20 at 7 p.m. This event comes at the 80th anniversary of Spratlan’s birth and the 10th anniversary of the debut of his opera *Life is a Dream* with Santa Fe Opera. The program will be a retrospective on Spratlan’s life and work featuring highlights from his musical compositions alongside reflections from Spratlan himself. More information at www.pvsoc.org.

The **Leverett Education Fund is having a forum** on Zoom this Sunday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m. The title of the forum is Challenges to Funding Our School and will cover the budgetary process. A notice sent by the organizers says that if you register for the forum, they will deliver hot cocoa to you! To register, and find the Zoom link and other information, go to www.leveretteducationfoundation.org/events.

The **4th Annual Ice Sculpture Invasion** wraps up this weekend on the Quadrangle at the Springfield Museums. Over a dozen ice sculptures will be placed around the Quadrangle. This year’s theme is centered on dinosaurs, bears, Hasbro game pieces, Monopoly Man, penguins, and much more.

Plan a fun day trip with the whole family: dress warmly, wear a mask, and get ready to enjoy getting outside. The gate at the Quadrangle

will be open until 7 p.m. during this weekend. Parking will be available right at the Springfield Museums parking lot, located at 21 Edwards Street, and the Quadrangle will be lit up at night to enjoy the ice sculptures. Blake House Café at the Museums will be open during lunch. The last day is Sunday, February 21.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield launches an **online Fiction Critique Group** on Monday, February 22. The group is designed for writers who, over the past year, have been working in isolation and are eager to process their ideas with others in the community.

The group will meet via Zoom on the fourth Monday of each month. It will be led by Karen Shapiro Miller, a local science and science fiction writer, whose work has been published in a variety of venues, including NASA websites, *Northeast Magazine*, and this paper. The group is part of LAVA’s Monday evening programming, which includes a Poets and Writers Virtual Café, an Online Playwrights’ Circle, and a Book Club.

For more information about the critique group, or to apply, email karen@localaccess.org. Your request to join should include approximately ten pages of your finished or in-progress fiction.

The Mass Mentoring Partnership is sponsoring an online **conversation about leadership and resilience** and invites youth to attend it on Monday, February 22 at 3:30 p.m. The talk, called “Where Do We Go From Here,” is moderated by members of the Boston Celtics. The event is free, but registration is required. Email the Partnership to register: aubourg@massmentors.org.

The Interfaith Council of Franklin County is hosting a three-part program on the realities of racism in Franklin County entitled **Lifting the Veil: Racism in Franklin County**. They will be hosting three different Zoom evenings with three different panels.

The first panel on February 24 will feature four African Americans who

live and work here in our county telling their stories and experience with racism right here. The second, on March 11 at 7 p.m., will feature four white people who are grandparents, parents, or spouses of African Americans. The third panel on March 25 at 7 p.m. will be made up of four white, black, and brown anti-racist activists sharing their own stories of getting involved in this work.

The Interfaith Council’s hope is that these panels are just the beginning of anti-racism work taken on by various groups, congregations, and families. To register for this program, email Interfaithcfc@gmail.com.

The online, free **Authors and Artists Festival** is coming up next weekend, February 27 and 28. Starting things off on February 27th at 11 a.m. is Rich Holschuh, spokesman for the Elnu Abenaki, a Vermont State-recognized tribe. Squakeag/Northfield is within the traditional Sokoki Abenaki homelands, and the festival opens with a grounding as to where we physically would be if we weren’t in cyberspace.

Just afterwards, the first talk will be given by Sherri Mitchell of the Penobscot Indian Nation, followed by Christian McEwen, a western Massachusetts resident originally from Scotland; Scott Russell Sanders, from the midwestern US; Gay Bradshaw, from the west coast; and Patrick Curry, originally from Canada, now a resident of London in the UK.

The poets bring a diversity of voices from Pakistan, Israel, Taiwan, the Passamaquoddy Nation, and the US. And that’s just Day One of the two-day free Authors and Artists Festival.

Day Two includes Deb Habib from Seeds of Solidarity Farm; Joan Maloof of the Old Growth Forest Network; Florida bird expert Susan Cerulean; and Simon Wilson, speaking on religion and the ecological crisis from Canterbury Christ Church University in south-eastern England.

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PROPERTY from page A3

New York, they have visited the Turners Falls location “a few times.” “It seems very successful – there’s a lot of traffic,” he said. “It’s a nice little town, it’s very stable, and that’s what we’re looking for.”

He added that the family hopes to retain both the Family Dollar and Aubuchon Hardware. “It’s not our intention to disturb what’s been working for decades,” he said.

While Family Dollar opened its Turners Falls location in March 1992, Aubuchon has had a presence on Avenue A since 1937. The hardware store moved from 57 Avenue A to its current site in December 1991.

“We are in the process of negotiating a lease with 200 Avenue A LLC,” Jeff Aubuchon, chief financial officer of the family-owned regional chain, told the *Reporter* this week. “We have an advantageous position in the current lease.... It’s a challenge in negotiating, but it’s moving.”

While the property has changed hands a number of times, it has seldom actually been sold.

For years, the entire lot served as a railroad depot – first for the Vermont & Massachusetts Railroad, which built the Turners Falls Branch in 1871, then leased the route to the Fitchburg Railroad in 1874. Fitchburg bought the V&M in the 1890s, and then turned around and leased it to the Boston & Maine, which eventually acquired the whole system by merger in 1919.

The railroad would own the property contin-

uously until 1960, when was deeded over, apparently at no cost to the Runkel Trust, a vehicle for Boston-based investors Paul and Edythe Mannos. Paul’s previous claim to fame was a 1941 bribery conviction that also brought down Cambridge mayor John Lyons; by the late 1950s he had found his calling acquiring former B&M stations across the region for redevelopment, operating as Northeast Management Co.

Mannos’s local agent in Turners Falls was Greenfield developer Peter Mackin, who cleared the land with his Mackin Construction Co. and found tenants with Cosmac Realty. An existing local grocery, the First National store, moved in to north section of the new complex.

In the late 1960s, the Runkel Trust defaulted on a \$50,000 mortgage from another Boston investor named William Weiner, who purchased the property at the resulting foreclosure auction in 1968 under the name Myrtle Realty Trust.

Weiner sold the southernmost building to Mel-An Stores in 1971 for \$20,000; it was then sold to Greenfield Hardware & Plumbing Supply in 1979 for \$100,000, to George Maniatty in 1996 for \$300,000, and finally to the Salvation Army in 2017 for \$460,000.

Mackin, meanwhile, moved into the real estate space, doing business as the Pilgrim Leasing Corporation. In 1974 Pilgrim purchased the property, minus the piece Mel-An owned, for \$166,941.21.

In 1987 the corner grocery, now the IGA, needed more room, and a larger store was built on the south end of the plaza; Aubuchon and the

Family Dollar moved into the space vacated by the IGA. Food City took over the larger supermarket in the late 1990s.

After Mr. Mackin’s death in 2002, Helen, his widow, sold the southernmost section of the depot to Greenfield Savings Bank for \$260,000. Helen Mackin passed away in 2009. Later that same year, Food City purchased its store property for an even million. The remaining Mackin family interest in the parcel was entrusted to an entity named Greenfield Pilgrim 4, LLC, which ended up in the hands of Kimberly Hogan of Barnstable and John Mackin of Greenfield.

Greenfield Pilgrim 4 sold the parking lots in front of and behind the Salvation Army to the thrift store last June for \$65,000, and then the final section of the old depot, two days before Christmas, to the Sander family.

“Properties are very expensive in Boston – not just nominally, but from a valuation perspective,” Jacob Sander told the *Reporter* this week. “This one caught our eye: it’s fully occupied, it’s in a very stable town. There’s not a lot of institutional money in western Mass, so we think that valuations are much richer there – you can get a lot more for your money.”

“We told the tenants we want to keep the transition as smooth as possible,” Sander said, adding that he could not provide comment on the ongoing negotiation with Aubuchon, and that Family Dollar’s lease will not expire soon.

“I’m sure everyone would like to keep things the way they are.”



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TECH from page A1

clear dividers that go around each desk for extra protection. Each hallway has arrows on the floor that indicate if it is only allowed to be used going one way, or both ways.

While two grades are in person at the same time, they don't see each other much, because one will be taking part in their shop class while the other is taking their academic classes. If there is a positive COVID-19 case in our school, anyone who has been in the same room as that person will be contacted by the school, and is required to quarantine. The entire grade that the person is in will also all stay home for a day or two to make sure that the classrooms are all deeply cleaned and safe for returning students.

As a student at FCTS, I have found that in our school students have done a great job at keeping up with the rules that we need to follow to keep each other safe. Despite everything around us changing in both our school and our home communities as numbers change, students have made the most of our time together in-person, and we have still found ways to have fun and keep each other safe.

I have found that the people around me want to be in school – much more than I have ever seen in past years. I believe that it's not only because we have all experienced so much time online, but also because our school has done such an amazing job helping us make the most of the time we do have.

Being a part of this year's freshman class, I have found that the teachers have done an amazing job making my class feel welcome and helping us adjust to being in a new school while keeping everyone safe.

Teachers have been very supportive of us, and

are always there and understanding if we need extra help on something, because they know that online learning can be hard.

I think that the staff has done a great job helping students adjust, and working around the challenges that are thrown at them with rising case numbers. Their positive outlooks are something that I have admired and have been thankful for since September.

I talked to Brian Spadafino, the principal at FCTS, about how the rules we follow at the school were created, and how he feels the current hybrid model has been going. Here are his responses.

MR: *How did you, along with the others who helped, create the rules that we follow such as one-way hallways and mask breaks each period?*

BS: We formed a reopening committee over the summer to look at the state health guidelines. There were teachers, administrators, our school psychologist, a school nurse, and a parent on the committee. We met four times and adapted the guidelines to meet our school. Additionally, we used tents to create outdoor spaces for mask breaks and outdoor learning.

MR: *How well do you personally feel like students are following rules that have been set?*

BS: I have been very impressed with how most of our students have adhered to the rules we have set up. Of course, there is room for improvement, but for the most part, students are consistently wearing their masks, sanitizing their hands, and adhering to social distancing.

Students do need some reminders from time to time, but I am happy with the way students have adapted to this difficult school year.

MR: *What is the process like for making decisions about who is in person and who is not? This includes the normal schedule, and any quick decisions if there is an unexpected case.*

BS: Over the summer, we decided that grades 9 and 11 would be in-person and remote together, and grades 10 and 12 would be in-person and remote together. We did this to balance class sizes.

As for making decisions on when to adjust the schedule, we look at the data and make changes that we think will work. For example, to start the year we had grades 9 and 11 in one day and then grades 10 and 12 in the next day. This worked perfectly in the fall, when cases in the county were very low, and it helped our teachers and students get to know each other.

After the holidays, cases across the state spiked, and we decided to adjust to having students in grades 9 and 11 in-person for two straight weeks and then remote for two straight weeks while the students in grades 10 and 12 were in-person.

What worked well with this schedule is when we had a couple of positive cases and people needed to quarantine, they were able to work remotely and were eligible to return to school in their next in-person cycle because the two week quarantine period lined up.

Additionally, it became obvious that we needed to adjust our remote learning schedule, because it was way too much screen time and students were struggling on remote days. Teachers have reported that the shorter remote periods have led to students being more engaged, and allowed them to have students "stay after" for extra help, because there is time between classes for extra help or to complete assignments.

see **TECH** next page

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Politicians; Police; Vaccinating Elders

By **GEORGE BRACE**

State representative Natalie Blais and Jared Freedman, chief of staff for state senator Joanne Comerford, both joined Leverett's remotely-held February 17 selectboard meeting for an annual visit to touch base with constituents. The pair outlined work being done in the legislature, and responded to a number of concerns facing small and rural towns, including school funding, public health, and police issues.

Blais noted that she and Comerford are both first-term legislators, which has contributed to the two offices working closely together, and commented on some of the difficulties facing small communities in their districts. She said health issues are a major focus, and pointed out that Massachusetts has 351 independent health jurisdictions, making changes to the system challenging. Blais cited her membership on the Ways and Means committee as a valuable assignment for working on health issues, among others. She also informed the meeting that senator Comerford had recently been appointed to chair a newly-forming committee on COVID-19 and emergency preparedness.

Selectboard chair Julie Shively asked if something could be done at the state level to address the issue of school district funding assessments reverting to a statutory formula if the towns in a given multi-town district do not unanimously approve a formula. "Chapter 70 is rough," said Shively of the statutory provisions. "Can't we move to majority?"

Shively said that Leverett's district includes three small towns and one big one – Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, and Amherst – and trying to reconcile their needs is extremely difficult and challenging.

Blais commented that Leverett

was not the only town facing this problem, and that declining enrollments are adding to the difficulty in some areas.

Town clerk Lisa Stratford commented in support of a pending bill which would make voting by mail and same-day registration permanent. Stratford said she couldn't emphasize enough how much work is involved in conducting elections, and she would like town clerks to have input on the legislation.

Police and Public Health

Police chief Scott Minckler notified the board that as of late last week, two officers are still electing not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at this time. The chief said he did not think they were 100 percent opposed, but were concerned about it being a new vaccine. The chief commented that it wasn't an issue unique to Leverett, and larger departments are having larger problems. He added that he believed all the other officers had received their second shot.

Board members asked Blais and Freedman if they'd come across the issue in other towns in their districts, and they responded that they hadn't yet, but it was a new issue.

Shively commented that the board had received four letters opposed to the officers' decision to not yet get vaccinated – one of which was from the Wendell selectboard – and two letters which supported their current choice. Leverett's department now covers the town of Wendell.

Board member Tom Hankinson related the "deep concern" expressed in a letter he had received, as well as a feeling among some residents that vaccinations should be mandated for police.

Leverett resident Dr. Melissa Colbert volunteered to meet with the officers and Shively before the next

selectboard meeting, in a continuing effort to encourage the officers to get vaccinated voluntarily. Shively said she'd like to give the officers one more opportunity before taking a next step of initiating a discussion with the police union.

Minckler also informed the board that he has received notice that the state will require part-time police officers to complete 300 to 500 hours of training at a "bridge academy" as part of a move toward more full-time police. He said that participation would proceed alphabetically by the officers' names, and that three officers in his department will need to enroll during the first year, but no money is budgeted for it.

Blais said she has been talking with chiefs in other towns who have expressed the same overall concern with the state's shift toward full-time policing, and that there is a recognition in Boston that what works there, may not work in western Massachusetts. She said she will continue to address the matter.

The board approved a request from the board of health (BOH) for a temporary project to provide assistance to at-risk elders in the community in getting vaccinated if they'd like to do so. The request mentioned that getting appointments has proved difficult for some people, and the outreach may also include offering rides and pointing people to available resources.

It was noted that the Council on Aging is not currently active, and that the BOH doesn't have a current list of at-risk elderly residents. The BOH stated that the contacting would be done under HIPAA regulations, and only with permission, and that respondents could choose to have no identifiable personal record included in the survey.

The board said they were estimating 300 or more residents who

could benefit. Stratford replied that she thought the list would be longer than 300.

The BOH also said they needed to fill a vacancy, and that anyone interested in "COVID-19 or sewers" should apply. The board meets twice a month for a total of four to eight hours.

Other Business

The selectboard changed the tentative date for annual town meeting from the last Saturday in April to the first Saturday in May, due to the April date coinciding with school vacation week, pending a lifting of the BOH's prohibition on large public gatherings.

The personnel board reported a recommendation of a 1.3% raise for town employees to match the rate of inflation.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis reported that a loan had been approved for the Teawaddle Hill Road water pipeline construction project, and a meeting was being set up for later this month to discuss the timeline for the project with those who are involved or affected.

McGinnis also said "we are feeling much better" about the project to swap the town's phone service to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). McGinnis said that after reviewing the project with town volunteers and determining what was needed, prior issues were resolved, and the price quoted by the consultant who is to perform the work has dropped.

The board relayed the contents of a letter from a Dudley Hill Road resident complimenting the highway department on their snow-plowing job after a recent snowstorm. The resident said they were extremely pleased to see a driver stop and wait for a little dog to get out of his way before continuing down the road.

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TECH from previous page

This has also coincided with us inviting our struggling students into school during their remote learning days. This gave our teachers and paraprofessionals access to students who needed extra help. It also provided those students with the structure of being in school.

All decisions about school closures for COVID-related reasons are made by Superintendent Martin in conjunction with our administrative team, our school nurses, and local DPH.

MR: *What have you learned worked best for keeping everyone safe? Were there things you found that didn't work as well as you hoped?*

BS: I would say exactly what the health professionals have been saying all along... Wear a mask, wash your hands, and practice social distancing.

It is also critical that students and staff who are not feeling well should stay home. We also expanded that to be if anyone in your household is ill, that student or staff member should stay home until the family member has a negative COVID test. We would rather be on the side of caution than to have the virus introduced into the school environment.

I would say what we found that didn't work well was our remote learning schedule. We wanted remote learning to be as close to in-person learning as possible, but what we learned was that it was having a negative impact academically and emotionally. Students were feeling isolated and overwhelmed.

The adjustment to the remote learning schedule seems to have reduced some of the anxiety. Unfortunately, isolation and lack of socialization is a byproduct of remote learning, which is why I'm so happy that we have been able to bring our students to school on a regular basis.

MR: *Do you have anything else related to the way our school is handling the virus that you would like to add?*

BS: I am thrilled with the way that the Franklin County Tech community has handled this year so far. Our students have been working hard and acting responsibly. Our teachers have had to adapt their teaching practices and make adjustments on the fly.

Our school nurses have spent days and nights interacting with students and parents, contact tracing, and working with DPH. Our paraprofessionals have been supporting our at-risk students at a high level. Our food services have been providing breakfasts and lunches for in-person students, as well as breakfasts and lunches for our remote students.

Our secretarial staff has kept in communication with parents and worked through new protocols for interacting with the public. Our custodial and maintenance staff has wiped down tables and chairs after each lunch and sanitized the building on a daily basis. Our administrators have been looking at trends, meeting regularly, and implementing plan after plan since last spring.

It has been a difficult year, yet rewarding because we are making it work.

I think we are all hopeful that this will all end soon, and we get back to some normalcy with all of our students back to school for the 2021-2022 school year.

I also interviewed a few teachers on their perspectives of how our school has been running, and how on-line teaching has been going for them at Franklin Tech. Those interviews will be published in next week's edition. Stay tuned!

Charlotte Valle is a ninth-grade student at Franklin County Technical School.



AIRPORT from page A1

of the airport. He has presented detailed projections of the airport financials showing that the additional cost of borrowing for the purchase, as well as administering the former Pioneer facility, would be covered by increased revenues.

These projections have previously been detailed at several public meetings, including one on February 13, which will be posted on Montague Community Television's Vimeo site: vimeo.com/mctvchannel17/videos/.

According to the presentation, 95% of the purchase price will be covered by federal and state grants, but those grants will be doled out over a period of years so the town will need to borrow to cover the initial purchase, as well as the cost of some of the facility's needed upgrades.

Article 8 would purchase the property – including three parcels of land, several buildings and a fueling station – at a cost of \$1,450,000.

According to member Greg Garrison, the capital improvements committee (CIC) agreed that unless the Pioneer property was purchased there would be a “high level of risk” that it would fall into the hands of a non-aviation company.

Fin com member John Hanold expressed concern that the amount of borrowing might be inadequate to cover the purchase price, which had not yet been established.

Camden said that as of the meeting there was no firm sale price, in part because the property “was in the final stages of the appraisal, which has been going on for three months.” He said the appraisal process required by the Federal Aviation Administration is based on the market value of “like property,” but there were few similar properties on the market.

“We feel that the \$1.45 million is more than adequate to cover cost of the property as well as legal fees, closing fees, and the appraisal,” Camden said. He added that it was “not unusual” to seek an appropria-

tion potentially in excess of the amount needed, then reduce the borrowing if the price came in lower.

“If you think we're safe, then I'm all right,” said Hanold.

The fin com has reviewed borrowing and payback scenarios at previous meetings, and on February 13 Camden went into greater detail about the timing of the federal and state reimbursements. The town's 5% share of the ultimate cost would be integrated into the airport budget.

At the request of town administrator Steve Ellis, Camden reviewed the results of a Phase I environmental study, which Ellis said would be needed for any property purchased by the town. Camden said that although the study had not been published, there were “no significant findings on the site.” He also said the Turners Falls Fire District had provided documentation on the removal of an “old underground fuel tank.”

The funding source for the approved purchase, which was included in the final motion, was listed as “long-term borrowing.”

Article 9 would borrow \$68,000 for upgrades to the Pioneer fueling system. Garrison said that the CIC approved these upgrades because they were necessary for revenue and the “long term viability” of the airport.

The fin com and selectboard approved this article with virtually no discussion because, according to fin com chair Jen Audley, “I feel we have already been very thoroughly educated on the reason for this, and the payback.”

“I think everybody is an aviation expert after the last three months,” said Camden.

Ellis told the *Reporter* that the main upgrade planned for the fueling system is the installation of a credit card reading capacity. Right now refueling requires an employee to be present.

The original Article 10 in the preliminary warrant, which would have funded the construction of a new hanger on Pioneer proper-

ty, was removed because Camden said he had received a “preliminary commitment” of state funds to finance 80% of its construction. He said that funding was a “couple of years out,” and that by then the airport might be able to fund its share of the project through its own retained earnings account.

The “new” **Article 10** would fund an increase of \$39,800 in the current fiscal year's airport budget. The added costs associated with the Pioneer purchase include utility bills, some facility upgrades, extending the airport's intern program, and “extra pay” for Camden, although he will not be transitioning into a full-time benefited position until next year.

The revenue source for Article 10 was listed as town “free cash,” which the town expects to be paid back by increased airport earnings, according to the discussion at the meeting.

Other Articles

Returning to the earlier articles on the town meeting warrant, **Article 1** would affirm the holding of the meeting remotely via Zoom Webinar and vVote. The state emergency enabling law H.4777, signed by Governor Baker last spring, allows towns with representative town meetings to hold them remotely during the pandemic.

Article 2 would extend the purpose of a \$15,000 appropriation for walkway upgrades at the Unity Park playground, including crack sealing and painting of the park's basketball court.

Article 3 would increase the salary “schedule” of the town's emergency management director from \$5,765 to \$7,500. This was justified in terms of the director's increased hours during the pandemic. Ellis said this increase could be covered by federal COVID-19 funds – although the motion would not require a funding source – and would not “cascade” into the next fiscal year.

Article 4 would increase the town's information technology budget by \$12,000 for the current

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
LEVERETT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a public remote hearing on March 1, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m. to review a Notice of Intent for the new East Leverett Road public waterline extension submitted by the Town of Amherst. The project runs along part of Cushman Road and Teawaddle Hill Road. The public can participate by emailing the Conservation Commission for the link to the Go To Meeting (ConCom@leverett.ma.us). The link will also be posted at the Town Hall by Thursday February 25, 2021. The application is on file and is available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission Office by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3.

Montague February 25
Special Town Meeting:
Registering and Voting

For town meeting members:

The February 25 town meeting and the two “practice sessions” – 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 18 and 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 20 – will require the use of two platforms: Zoom Webinar for participation, and VVoter for voting.

Participants in any of these sessions are strongly encouraged to begin the log-in process well in advance. You should probably register for these meetings even before the log-in process by clicking links sent to you by town hall.

Town meeting members who have email addresses on file with the Town Clerk will be sent instructions via email as to how to log in, view, and participate in the meeting. Any members who have not received an email should contact the Town Clerk's office at townclerk@montague-ma.gov or (413) 863-3200 ext. 203 to receive that information.

For those not familiar with Zoom Webinar or VVoter, instructions will be sent to those who have verified their contact information. Information on the process is also available on the town website.

Although the meeting will be accessible by cell phone, town officials strongly recommend that members use a laptop, tablet, or other computer. Town hall has some “loaner” computers available. To access them, contact Wendy Bogusz at selectscty@montague-ma.gov

tague-ma.gov or 863-3200 ext. 108, or Steve Ellis at townadmin@montague-ma.gov or 863-3200 ext. 110.

To repeat: make sure that town officials have your email and have sent you registration information; that you register for the meetings well in advance; that you begin the log-in process half an hour before the meeting. You are also urged to participate in one of the “practice sessions.”

More information, including the warrant and motions for the meeting, is available on the town website. The special town meeting itself will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 25.

For non-members:

Registered Montague voters who are not town meeting members, but who wish to view and participate in this remote town meeting, must submit a request to participate in the meeting to the Town Clerk at townclerk@montague-ma.gov or (413) 863-3200 ext. 203, no later than 6:30 pm on Tuesday, February 23.

Upon receipt of the request and verification of the requester's voter registration status, the Town Clerk will give instructions for participating.

For individuals only wishing to watch the meeting, it will be broadcast on Montague Community Television, Comcast Channel 17.



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Eben Afarikumah Raises the Bar for GCC's Computer Information Systems Program



Greenfield is a world away from Eben Afarikumah's original home in Ghana, but it was the similarities between the two places that drew him to GCC. "Where I come from is hilly and mountainous. So when I drive into GCC, and I see the mountains, it does give me an idea of where I originally come from and that kind of attachment to my origin."

Although the beautiful setting drew him to GCC, it was the mission that inspired him to stay. "I'm also here to impart knowledge to other people so that they can become what they wish to become," he says. "And indeed that encouraged me to stay with GCC."

Afarikumah, who began teaching at GCC in the fall of 2019, is an assistant professor of computer information systems. He came to GCC with an extensive background as a researcher, instructor, and IT professional both in Ghana and in the United States.

Afarikumah began his education at the University of Ghana, earning a bachelor's of science in computer science and statistics and a master's in business administration. While attending the International Statistical Association Conference in Germany, Afarikumah became very interested in big data and decided to pursue work in that direction. In particular, he was interested in helping hospitals develop electronic database systems for managing patient medical records. This led him to the work of his doctoral degree in information technology at the Accra Institute of Technology and Open University of Malaysia, studying electronic health and telehealth as it pertains to the developing world.

Afarikumah has a passion for making health care available to people in remote areas, especially connecting them to specialists through technology. "That is something that I'm so excited and enthused about—to make sure we deploy technology for the benefit of humanity."

It was his interest in health IT that led Afarikumah to Massachusetts. The state is central to this work in the United States, so in 2013 he relocated to Worcester to work on an AS in computer information systems at Quinsigamond Community College. Afarikumah finished this degree in 2016 and then finished his doctorate in 2019, writing a dissertation entitled, "Implementing Digital Health in Ghana: An Actor-Network Theory Approach."

Before coming to the United States, Afarikumah worked for many years as a senior scientific researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial research, the largest research institute in Ghana. He also taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Ghana Business School and in their continuing education program, as well as at the Accra Institute of Technology Department of Biostatistics, among other institutions.

Once he settled in Massachusetts, Afarikumah worked at Genesis Healthcare Systems as their medical records manager and taught courses in business information systems at Framingham State University.

Afarikumah also took the opportunity to start a nonprofit, the Telehealth and Assisted Living Center in Worcester, to further his efforts to improve people's lives through technology. The organization helps senior living communities implement telehealth services, educates people on becoming independent through technology, provides assistive technology tools to people with disabilities, and collects technology donations to support people in the developing world.

At GCC, Afarikumah teaches a variety of technology courses, including JavaScript, Microcomputer Software Tools I and II, Relational Database Design and Application, Web Site Design and Development I and II, Network Server Administration, and Programming Principles and Concepts. He is also teaching Foundations of Data Analytics through GCC Workforce Development. To broaden students' computer science opportunities, Afarikumah, as a member of the college's planning and evaluation committee, is also working with the Five Colleges and the community colleges of the Pioneer Valley to introduce data science into the curricula.

Afarikumah's knowledge and experience have been crucial to the development of the college's computer information systems program. "He was able to make some of the enormous distinctions between what a computer programming and a computer information curriculum looks like prior to this decade and what one looks like for the future," observes Dean of Social Sciences and Professional Studies Chet Jordan. "He has the imaginative capacity to think forward and think deeply into what the curriculum needs and what the students need." Afarikumah also has a clear understanding of how best to prepare students for careers. He knows, as Jordan explains, "a lot of our students that go into the computer information systems program are not going to be computer scientists, but are going to go into fields that require them to be very tech savvy, understand programming, and understand web design."

In his teaching, Afarikumah loves opportunities to help students become independent in their work. "I tell my students it is not a grade that I am particular about—I want you to get some skill," he explains. He also enjoys helping students see that they are up to the challenge of learning to work with computers. "At the end, when they come up and say, 'Oh, we thought this would be a difficult course but you made it look simple for us,' I get so happy about that." Afarikumah also loves the opportunity to mentor students in preparing for careers and even using their IT skills to start businesses or nonprofits of their own.

Afarikumah is involved in extracurricular activities at GCC as well, serving as the faculty advisor of the CompTIA student organization. The group helps students with information technology career development, networking with professionals in the field, and preparation for CompTIA professional certification exams.

Outside of his work at GCC, Afarikumah is very immersed in his local community. He is on the board of directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County, which fosters mentoring relationships between adults and youth in the community, and a member of the Mohawk Trail Toastmasters Club. Afarikumah is also active in his church and volunteers with organizations supporting homeless people.

Dean of Social Sciences and Professional Studies Chet Jordan states, "Professor Afarikumah is an excellent member of the faculty and has explored various research opportunities that support the college's path to innovation."

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GILL from page A1

on the radar for a while,” but that the issue is more pressing now. “That is why we are meeting tomorrow,” he said, “to speed up the process.”

“Are there tiles that are cracking and asbestos exposed, or being released?” asked selectboard member John Ward.

“Yes,” Snedeker said. “That is my understanding, and I am sure Amber can tell us more about that.”

Flagg told the selectboard that there is exposed asbestos in “multiple places in the building,” including the cafeteria, and possibly in a hallway. “There are tiles in one of the classrooms that have made it so that children cannot be in that classroom,” she said. “My son is in that classroom.”

While Flagg said that another classroom is available for the children for their expected return from remote learning on Monday, she expressed concern that it is not as large as the previous one, and that it is used for multiple purposes.

“Thank you, that is helpful,” said Ward. “I was wondering if something has come up that the situation seems worse than it had been in years past.... It has been on the radar, and back off again, and it has been hard to get a clear handle on what we need to do, and when we need to do it.”

“It is going to take some planning, for sure,” said Snedeker. “Asbestos remediation cannot be done while school is in session. There will have to be some other type of fix, I am assuming, in the short term, with a longer-range plan.”

“Correct,” said selectboard chair Randy Crochier. “It seems like this spring it is starting to show that it is in more need than what they had alluded to in the last year or so,” he added, noting that the asbestos issue had not been a priority of the regional school district’s facilities managers in the past, but that COVID-19 has brought greater awareness to “safety issues of all kinds.”

Crochier said he plans to visit the school with facilities manager Heath Cummings to see what repairs are needed, and that an area might be able to be patched temporarily “instead of doing an entire classroom.”

Flagg said that she talked to the classroom teacher and the principal to see if a rug, or plastic and a rug, could be placed over the tiles, but she was told that several people needed to be consulted before a decision could be made.

“We will be having more discussions on this tomorrow with the capital improvements and planning committee,” Snedeker told Flagg. “You are more than welcome to attend.”

Vaccination Updates

Crochier, who also serves as a regional health agent at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), reported that FRCOG will start COVID-19 vaccine clinics this week in Deerfield. “After that we are going to Buckland, and then Kringle Candle in Bernardston,” Crochier said, “and then a site to be determined in Montague, which is strongly looking like it is going to be the Franklin County Regional Technical School.”

Crochier said more sites will open as more doses are made available, and shared that FRCOG has been talking about implementing drive-through clinics in the near future – at least in Deerfield and West County.

Crochier also noted that current COVID-19 vaccine regulations allow anyone accompanying those who are 75 years old, or older, to their vaccination appointment to also get vaccinated, whether or not they are in a currently eligible category. That companion can receive their first shot at that time, even if the elder they are accompanying is getting their second shot.

Crochier warned of scammers who are offering companion services for a fee, cautioning those 75 and over not to allow someone they do not know to accompany them to their appointment. Rides are available through LifePath.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien said that all of his department’s firefighters have received their first shots, and most have received their second one now.

Fire Department

Beaubien submitted a quote to the selectboard of \$1,050 for replacing old halogen truck lights with LED lights, with another \$2,836 for replacement fire hose. The purchase orders were unanimously approved.

Beaubien told the board that he and deputy chief William Kimball are hopeful about receiving a \$650,000 FEMA grant for a new fire truck that they submitted on February 12.

“Billy and I are optimistic about it this year – we were last year – but we are more so this year. There will be a 5% match that the town would have to come up with, which is about \$32,500,” said Beaubien.

“We also got our SAFE grant that we apply for every year,” Beaubien continued. “It is more than what we asked for, because if not all fire departments in Massachusetts apply, those allocated funds are distributed to the departments that did apply for the grant.”

The Student Awareness of Fire Education grant will be used for fire prevention activities in schools,

Gill Historical Commission Discusses Museum (And a Certain Monument) at Riverside

By JERRI HIGGINS

The Gill historical commission met by Zoom on Tuesday afternoon to discuss various projects. Commission member Lynn Stowe Tomb asked members to brainstorm ways to use and to drive traffic to the Gill website, as well as the Montague Historical Society archive website, and what might be appropriate to post on each of those sites.

Tomb and commission member Pam Shoemaker have been working on a book about Jennie Williams Bardwell and life in 19th-century Gill. The volume will look at the Gill homemaker and breadwinner’s life through her letters and diaries, and may include a chapter on area stonemasons of the 1800s.

The commission also discussed the Captain Turner memorial stone on the French King Highway, which had been voted to be removed from its current site late last year by the historical commission and the Gill selectboard. Timothy Neumann, the director of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA), informed Tomb earlier this year that the monument would not be removed from its current location.

For her part, Shoemaker said that she would like to see the PVMA “take their stone back.”

The commission agreed to approach the PVMA to see if they would move the memorial stone to a different location, such as a museum.

Historical commission chair Kit Carpenter said that she and Doreen Stevens had been working on inventory of the town’s historical collections, and would like to start identifying materials that should reside in the museum at the Riverside Municipal Building (RMB).

Shoemaker stressed the need to know where materials will be held for research purposes. “If you are a researcher and you come to this town, it is very hard to tell where to go,” she said. She suggested that the commission should prioritize archiving materials so people can make appointments for family, scholarly, or other research.

Carpenter suggested finding student interns to help with the inventory.

Needed lighting replacement and building repairs at the RMB pose a challenge for the commission’s work: in order to bring materials and artifacts into the museum, the repair work needs to be completed, stymying their progress toward categorizing and storing the materials.

Insurance appraisals for documents and artifacts was also briefly discussed. The commission agreed that a current \$25,000 insurance cap for the museum’s contents is not adequate, and plan to raise the issue with town administrator Ray Purington.

Tomb said she received an email from Montague historical commission chair David Brule alerting her to a February 25 deadline to apply for a grant that could fund a proposed historical walking tour in Riverside. She asked for a short biography and writing topic from anyone who wants to be involved with the walking tour.

and was also used to give fire safety pamphlets and handouts at town events and during Fire Prevention Week. The department asked for a June 30 extension to use last year’s grant, which had not been spent down during the pandemic. Beaubien and Kimball said the money could be used for online presentations, and then to provide materials to the schools.

Other Business

“There is a revised list for the sewer liens of unpaid sewer bills that are getting added onto the real estate bill when they go out,” Purington told the selectboard, acting as sewer commissioners, on Tuesday. He said that a new cutoff date the town is using for the liens has “changed the numbers around,” and that the revised total is \$11,237.86 across fifteen different accounts.

The revision was unanimously approved.

Purington also told the board of a \$248.12 sewer abatement which had either been “miscommunicated or misfiled,” explaining that the original application was never received. The abatement was unanimously approved, along with approval for a revised abatement form, on Purington’s recommendation, which would ensure that abatement requests go directly to the sewer commissioners.



VACCINE from page A1

but you can’t vaccinate people if you don’t have enough vaccine to make available.”

However, a press release also issued on Wednesday by the governor’s office suggested that members of the new Phase 2 groups could begin booking appointments sooner:

“Due to extremely high demand for appointments and limited vaccine supply, it could take more than a month for all eligible individuals to secure an available appointment, unless federal supply significantly increases. Recently, Massachusetts has been receiving approximately 110,000 first doses per week from the federal government. Residents are encouraged to keep checking the website as appointments are added on a rolling basis.”

When this newly eligible reporter attempted to book an appointment at several sites on Wednesday evening, including the John Zon Center in Greenfield, Baystate Greenfield, CVS and Big Y in Greenfield, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, there were no appointments available, and the new eligibility criteria

had not yet been posted online.

The new criteria had also not yet been posted on the portion of the Department of Public Health website that helps residents locate vaccination centers in the region, www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine.

Reached for comment Wednesday, state senator Joanne Comerford said that local officials had not been informed in advance of the new criteria. “Regional/local public health didn’t expect this announcement, which is the fault of the Baker Administration,” she wrote. “I have no end of gratitude for regional and local public health officials working now to figure out the best next steps.”

Updated information, including the availability of appointments, should soon be provided at the state website and the website of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (www.frcog.org/covid-vaccine), or by calling local boards of health and senior centers.

The state has also established a 211 phone help line, FRCOG has a call line at (413) 774-3167 ext.153, and the senior agency LifePath provides assistance booking appointments at (413) 829-9285.



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POND from page A1

Wetlands Protection Act, period.... It doesn't have anything to do with recreation."

To deal with one particularly aggressive invasive species, an aquatic plant called milfoil, the plan calls for spreading an herbicide called ProcellaCOR on eight acres along the perimeter of the pond and near the public boat launch on Depot Road.

ProcellaCOR was first used on Leverett Pond in 2019 and the results were "very effective," according to Mulholland who has lived on the pond for 45 years. "The difference was just unbelievable," he said. The FLP does not plan to use the herbicide this year, but anticipates using it again as needed sometime within the next five years.

Other herbicides, such as diquat, could also be used to control nuisance plants like curly-leaf pondweed, swollen bladderwort, naiad, and waterweed, according to the group's plan.

"Herbicide applications to be minimized and are considered short-term solutions to be reduced over time," read the NOI. "When used they will target invasive aquatic vegetation species, and where applicable nuisance native plants that are interfering with the Pond's ecology."

A Difficult Foe

"Much negativity can be thrust upon herbicide use, and that negativity has resonance among a population who have over their lifetimes witnessed neglectful individuals, industries, municipalities even, over-apply chemicals and under-apply reasonable restraint. This is not the case here," Hankinson wrote on the listserv. "Some of you may have heard rumors about floating dead plant matter and piles of dead plant debris floating in the pond near the end of the summer.... [T]he timing of their appearance and their size bears no relationship to the use of aquatic herbicides in the pond."

Eurasian milfoil was first detected in Leverett Pond in 1994, but

today a hybrid strain known as variable milfoil dominates the pond. It can grow up to one inch per day and is resistant to a common method of biological control, the introduction of a specific type of weevil that feeds on the plant.

"It blocks out all the good plants and all the native plants," Mulholland said. "It's an aggressive colonizer."

Milfoil is easily fragmented, allowing it to spread throughout a body of water, so it is typically managed by herbicide use followed by mechanical harvesting.

"If you get in there with a harvester, you're going to spread the daylight out of that stuff," Mulholland explained. "Companies won't do it."

Another option, removing the plants by hand with the help of SCUBA-diving equipment, is one of the most expensive and time-consuming means of controlling invasive species, Mulholland said. Milfoil grows best in sandy soil at five feet or deeper underwater.

So Many Permits

Since at least 2010, the FLP has coordinated hydro-raking in front of private properties and around the public access area. A hydro-rake is a boat with a mechanical arm which reaches below the surface of the water to scrape vegetation off the pond's floor. Each private landowner around the pond pays the contractor directly for the service; while the town has paid to clear the area in front of the public boat launch.

In a November 10 letter acknowledging its receipt of the FLP's most recent plan, MassDEP informed the group that a special permit should have been required for hydro-raking.

The FLP had estimated that hydro-raking the pond would result in the removal of up to 16.7 cubic yards of material per year, which is under the threshold requiring additional federal permitting under the Clean Water Act. However, MassDEP pointed out that under the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act (MGL



ROBERTSON PHOTO

The pond's newly rebuilt dam makes a seasonal drawdown possible.

Chap. 91), a license is still required.

"Removing any bottom material is considered dredging," the DEP wrote. "Because one is dredging a Great Pond, a Chapter 91 license is required." The department's letter also pointed out that the state requested a license from the group in comments on its 2010 NOI, "but no application was submitted. Please ensure it is done for this project." Now the FLP must submit a "graphical representation" to demonstrate the scale of the project and prove that a federal permit would not be required.

"If the conservation commission approves our notice of intent, the next thing we have to do is apply for a dredging permit," Mulholland told the Reporter. "That's a fairly recent rule."

Draining The Swamp

Another method of controlling vegetative growth would be through an annual "drawdown," in which the pond's water level is lowered during the winter to kill off exposed vegetation along its edge, or littoral zone.

Leverett Pond is spring-fed, and the first documented dam at its northeast end was built in the late 18th century. Without the dam, the pond would be about one quarter of

its current size and surrounded by wetlands.

The FLP, which formed as a non-profit in 1992, owns the land the dam sits on. The current NOI seeks approval from the town and state to continue the group's management of the pond as first outlined in a lengthy 1999 management plan, updated in 2004, 2010, and 2020.

"All applications or use of mechanical equipment and herbicides will require the prior annual approval of the LCC before weed management may occur," the new NOI reads.

In 2019 the FLP helped finance a \$360,000 replacement of the dam, stabilizing water levels at two feet higher than they were the year prior. The FLP raised \$100,000 towards construction and permitting costs to match a state grant for the same amount, and received a Community Preservation Fund grant of \$160,000 for the remainder of the project.

Leverett Pond has not been drawn down before, but the new dam was designed to allow its water level to be manipulated. According to Mulholland, drawdowns are the FLP's preferred method of managing nuisance growth in the long term.

"It took a huge number of permits," Mulholland said. "Now that

we have the new dam, it's possible to do a drawdown.... Something like a drawdown is pretty extensive because it's going to affect the shoreline all the way around."

"The littoral zone is important; it is the main life zone of the pond," said Macaylla Silver, one of the Leverett residents who criticized the management plan over the listserv. "It is this zone that they wish to empty and freeze to death."

Silver has been critical of the FLP's role in determining the pond's ecology. "This is a complex issue revolving around different ideas of what constitutes a state-owned body of water," he told the Reporter. "It's up to the state, not the FLP, to determine the evidence, and it's up to the conservation commission to make sure what is being done follows the notice of intent."

"Regardless of the shifting reasons year after year," he argued, "the 'FLP' has revealed its full intent: a winter drawdown to kill both native and invasive species, a great deal of amphibian life, a large portion of invertebrates and the food sources for birds and fish."

According to Mulholland, the FLP plans to hire a wetlands consultant to study the potential impacts of a drawdown on the pond's ecology. The update currently under consideration by the con com does not include any plans for a drawdown, but does say that the organization is "pursuing a NOI to allow occasional winter drawdowns of about 4 feet," adding that "a drawdown of more than 3 feet must be reviewed by Massachusetts Fish and Game."

The conservation commission's hearing on the FLP's updated plan has been continued until its May 3 meeting, according to a statement on the town website.. Multiple attempts to reach the commission were unsuccessful as of press time. The con com's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 1 at 7 p.m. via Go-ToMeeting.



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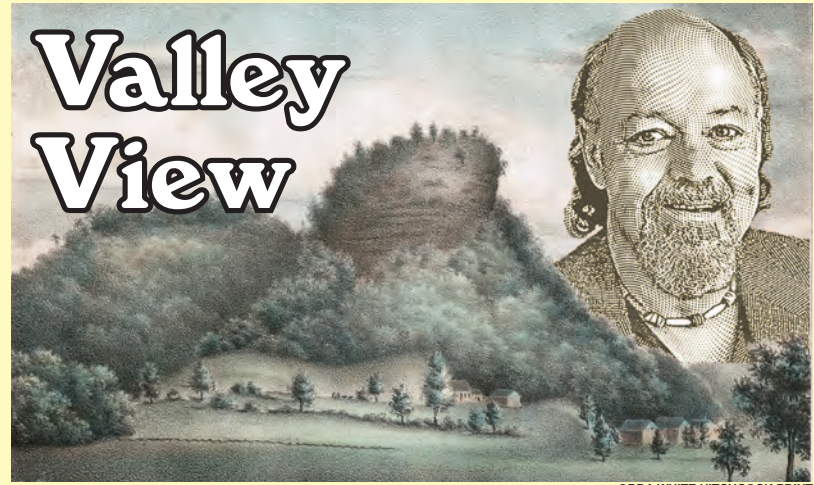
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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER FEBRUARY 18, 2021



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Sunday, February 9, 1969, a cold, threatening nor’easter brewing in gray winter skies.

I was 15, a Frontier Regional School sophomore, no driver’s license, hoping the storm would not derail a much-anticipated road trip to Boston Garden. The plan was to attend ABC’s 1 p.m., nationally-televised, NBA game-of-the-week matinee between the defending-champion Boston Celtics and their rival Philadelphia 76ers – play-by-play man Chris Schenkel and color analyst Jack Twyman at the mics.

Henry Boron was driving. He owned a small downtown market in South Deerfield and had established some impressive Celtics connections. Son Rickey, Frontier’s first 1,000-career-point basketball scorer, attended and eventually rose to counselor at a pair of summer camps owned and operated by Celtics teammates. Sharpshooting Hall of Fame guard Sam Jones owned one; backup backcourt mate Larry Siegfried the other.

Henry, no shrinking violet, had built relationships with many Celtics at the camps, including Hall of Fame coach/general manager Red Auerbach. Leave it to Henry, a first-class schmoozer and well-known Hinsdale railbird. The rugged, outgoing, square-jawed grocer had no fear, was not taciturn by any stretch. He had social skills, was good with kids, and loved a good laugh or small-town prank.

What a great time the late Sixties were for Connecticut Valley basketball fans. Two hours east, future Hall of Fame player-coach Bill Russell’s incredible run of 11 NBA championships in 13 years was nearing the end simultaneously with the Amherst emergence of Julius Erving – a skinny UMass sophomore forward from Roosevelt, New York. The kid could jump through the roof, and Erving fever was selling out Curry Hicks Cage. The valley had never owned a talent like Erving, who, after blossoming under late UMass coach Jack Leaman, went on to a glorious Hall of Fame NBA career.

Word of Erving’s Yankee Conference high-wire act traveled like wildfire through the valley. You had to get there early to attend his

1968-69 *freshman* games, in the days before freshmen were eligible for NCAA varsity basketball. Even though dunking was then forbidden in the college game, Erving’s preliminary 6 p.m. freshman games were sold out, standing-room only once word got around. No lie, the lines for game-day ticket sales and free student admission started forming at 4:30. I saw it with my own eyes, and got there early with my dad.

But let us not digress. Back to that memorable 1969 Celtics-Sixers showdown.

Though I wasn’t privy to the household “negotiations” leading to Henry Boron’s decision to brave the looming storm, I’m sure his son’s pleading was the deciding factor. A gambler at heart, Henry must have figured he’d roll the dice and live with the outcome. Forecasters predicted a midday start for the storm. He may have hoped we could get there and back before all hell broke loose.

Well, that didn’t happen.

Honestly, I have no recollection of the ride *to* Boston, and can’t even recall who else was with us, if anyone. Though I believe someone else was there, both Borons are dead and so could be the other passenger for all I know. I asked around and could not come up with a fourth or fifth party.

What I know for sure is that I was there, and we witnessed a classic Celtics win before surviving a harrowing journey home through a blizzard in one piece. Treacherous Route 2 was clogged with stranded vehicles in the breakdown lane and jack-knifed tractor-trailers flipped on their sides in the median strip. Henry would plow past the stranded vehicles, snow flying over the roof of his Chevy three-seater station wagon, tooting the horn with taunting laughter to unfortunate marooned motorists.

“If you let your foot off the gas in conditions like this, boys, you’re all done,” he’d say, appearing to enjoy the challenge.

As it turned out, we were in good hands. By the grace of God and Henry’s driving skills, we miraculously made it all the way home, likely a rare feat that day for folks in our predicament. Few would have attempted the 200-mile round trip to begin with.

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B5

Custom Bonnet Business Thrives

By KAREN GUILLETTE

TURNERS FALLS – In these cold and dark winter months beholding something as “Sweet As April” is a particularly appealing idea. No matter the season, however, a growing number of moms, dads, aunts, grandmothers, and others are finding plenty of sweetness in the artfully designed, handmade bonnets for infants and toddlers at Sweet As April, an online, family-run business based in Turners Falls.

Bonnets for women and children have a long history that dates back to the middle ages. A bonnet is distinguished from a hat or other forms of headgear by being tied under the chin while covering the back of the head and leaving the forehead uncovered.

Although most of the infants and children of the last several generations have been “bonnetless,” there seems to be a growing interest in bonnets. Carrie Keefe, the owner, artist, and visionary behind Sweet As April, has become very successful in both updating and popularizing this accessory.

Keefe happened upon an unmet need for beautiful, environmentally-friendly bonnets for infants and toddlers quite by accident. Back in 2016 she was a mom, artist, and owner of Mormor, an art gallery in Shelburne Falls. She was thinking of closing her business and staying home to take care of their young son who had been diagnosed with autism.

While she was preparing for a family camping trip, Keefe decided to make a sunbonnet for her young daughter Leia out of a former corduroy jumpsuit. She took some “before and after” photos of the bonnet on Leia while camping, and posted them on her Instagram feed.

The response was very positive, with many of her Instagram followers requesting similar bonnets for

ment on their part.”

Indeed, there were eight or so shanties of wildly differing aesthetics right there, and one more out with the working shanties on the ice of the frozen floodplain of the West River, known as the Meadows, across the street. The diversity of the shanties showed how fruitful it can be to give a group of artists the same prompt and let them have at it.

Rachel Mangean, art teacher at Green Street School in Brattleboro, created a rectangular shanty bright-



Sweet As April is an online company based in Turners Falls making and selling bonnets out of upcycled fabric.

While she was preparing for a family camping trip, Keefe decided to make a sunbonnet for her young daughter Leia out of a former corduroy jumpsuit. She took some “before and after” photos of the bonnet on Leia while camping, and posted them on her Instagram feed.

The response was very positive, with many of her Instagram followers requesting similar bonnets for

see **BONNETS** page B4

ArtBeat by Trish Crapo Artful Ice Shanties

BRATTLEBORO – On Sunday, Valentine’s Day, my husband and I went on what he bemusedly referred to ahead of time as “a hot date to see some ice fishing shanties.”

Just before noon, we drove up to view the submissions in the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center’s “Artful Ice Shanties Design-Build Competition” at Retreat Farm on Linden Street. As hoped, the shanties provided some welcome levity and bright spots of color on a drab, wintry day.

Speaking to a small but enthusiastic crowd that had gathered to hear the announcement of what had been advertised ahead of time as various “light-hearted” awards, museum director Danny Lichtenfeld said that, after learning of an art shanty competition in Minneapolis, and because of ice fishing’s long history in the area, BMAC had considered doing a competition before but plans had just never moved forward.

“COVID-19 actually helped move this along,” Lichtenfeld said. “We were racking our brains for outdoor art experiences.”

Interspersed with outbreaks of muffled, mittened applause, Lichtenfeld praised all of the competition’s participants, saying, “Each one plunged into this with abandon. This was not a casual commit-

ment on their part.”

Indeed, there were eight or so shanties of wildly differing aesthetics right there, and one more out with the working shanties on the ice of the frozen floodplain of the West River, known as the Meadows, across the street. The diversity of the shanties showed how fruitful it can be to give a group of artists the same prompt and let them have at it.

Rachel Mangean, art teacher at Green Street School in Brattleboro, created a rectangular shanty bright-

ly painted with an underwater scene of coral inhabited by a red octopus with two protruding tentacles. She named her shanty “Teacher,” after the Netflix documentary *My Octopus Teacher*, which she had watched and loved. Suitably, Mangean’s shanty won the “Most Impressive Tentacles” award.

Other awards included “Most Likely to Change the World,” for Chloe Viner Collins’ and Shane Collins’ “No Justice, No Peace”

see **ARTBEAT** page B8



Bruce Campbell’s fish-shaped shanty, made from black birch branches covered with clear film, won “Most Artistic.” Craig Roach and Peter Poanessa’s muralistic shanty, in the background, won “Best of Show.”



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Senior Center Activities

FEBRUARY 22 THROUGH 26

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center is closed and will reopen when advised by state and local authorities that it is safe to do so. This measure is taken not lightly but with the utmost concern for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Council on Aging staff will be available for referrals and information from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, at (413) 863-9357 by telephone, and coa@montague-ma.gov by email.

ERVING

Senior Center director Paula Betters writes:

“Erving Senior Center is still closed to the public. We are here daily taking calls and doing outreach work for seniors and their families. Call with any questions or concerns, need help with SHINE, SNAP. We are also taking calls to help seniors sign up

for their COVID vaccine. We are here to help make a difference.” Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

Leverett senior activities are currently canceled. Further updates are being distributed via TTY telephone and email. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is open for a foot care clinic the first-Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Otherwise, there are no activities. The Senior Health Rides is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of November 30; hours and accommodations are still changing.

Big Y: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 772-0435

Foster's: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 773-1100

Green Fields Market: Senior hours from 8 to 9 a.m. Monday-Saturday and 10 to 11 a.m. on Sunday. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 5 the following day. Delivery also available. (413) 773-9567

McCusker's Market: Curbside pickup only 10 to 11 a.m. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop (413) 625-2548

Stop and Shop: Senior hours from 6 to 8 a.m. (413) 774-6096



By MISHEL IXCHEL

TURNERS FALLS – Last summer and fall, my kid and I belonged to a larger pod, and regularly spent time with two or three other families. This time was mostly spent outdoors, and while it was good to be in the presence of other parents, these playdates were precious in that they kept my kid engaged.

The previous winter had put a toll on all of us, and while some of us were bursting at the seams to spend time together, I realized that I mostly wanted to give my kid some kind of normalcy. Even though the risk was always there, it felt imperative to keep my child around his closest friends. And so we cruised, in semi-seclusion, using precautions and hoping for the best.

This changed as the weather cooled, and more exposures began to happen within the pod. First, someone's brother-in-law was exposed through a friend. Then, someone else's husband had a potential exposure at work. These back-to-back episodes snapped me out of it, and I removed myself from the group, knowing full well that this meant choosing isolation.

Since then I've been spending my kid-time at home, attempting to homeschool, while simultaneously figuring out a myriad of ways to keep him entertained – in addition to cooking, cleaning, and running a business on the side. When I look

Hello, Seclusion

back at the days of pre-pandemic, what I yearn for the most is not so much my friends, but babysitters.

I am a recluse at heart. I deeply appreciate time alone. In my late 30s, I've become less of a social butterfly and more of an urban nun. These days I spend most of my time either alone, or with my partner, who's also kind of a recluse, and we're both more than happy to be alone together. And when my child is around, the three of us seem to get along swimmingly. We've become our own little pod, three little peas, complete with inside jokes and secret handshakes. Taking a step back from the larger group made me realize just how much I've been longing for a simplified version of a pod, and how much more I appreciate the intimacy that it provides. This is a big realization for me, as I had spent most of my teenage years and adult life collecting friends and acquaintances.

I recently read Glennon Doyle's latest book, *Untamed*. There's a passage from it that I simply adore, because it gives me license to fully embrace my need to keep my circle intimate. Doyle writes about an instance when she was working at her desk, and was interrupted when she heard a knock at the door. Puzzled, as she was not expecting anyone, she looked up from her computer and began to scan the room. She spotted her wife, and her two kids, and immediately thought to herself: *everyone who belongs here is already here*.

Even though she describes her-

self as someone who loves people, she admits with pride that she loves people, but at a distance. This meant no random knocks at the door, no unexpected phone calls.

I loved this story, because that's how I feel these days. It's actually how I've been feeling for a long time, even pre-pandemic, but have never allowed myself to admit it. Today, I'm more than happy to quarantine with my partner and my child, and do not yearn for any more socialization beyond that. We're all a bunch of happy clams, and life would be otherwise great, except ironically, this seclusion also keeps at bay other vital support.

Here's the caveat: two adults are still outnumbered when it comes to raising a child. I don't care how many times it's been said, but it takes a whole village, y'all. At the end of the day, my kid needs way more than both of us combined can provide.

I now find myself wondering how we're going to re-enter into the world in the coming months. How can I teach my child vital social skills while honoring my need to explore my inner introvert? And in the meantime, how can I provide my child with enough stimulation without feeling overdrawn and exhausted?

Ecuadorian-born and New York City bred, Mishel Ixchel is mama to a five-year-old, and currently resides in Turners Falls where she practices and teaches the art of sacred self-care. You can find her on Instagram @indiemamadiaries.

Great Falls Middle School/Turners Falls High School

2nd Quarter Honor Roll

– Grade 6 –

FIRST HONORS
Augustus Beauchaine,
Owen Blanchard,
Jacob Broga, Jakob
Gould, Isabella
Licata, Layla Mathieu,
Brayden Slauenwhite,
Addison Talbot,
Braeden Talbot, Luka
Warren-Pukis

SECOND HONORS
Kimberl Ramirez
Martin, Kaya
Shipley-Aja

THIRD HONORS
Zachary Haskell

– Grade 7 –

FIRST HONORS
Camden Bonnett, Dylan Brunault, Maxon Brunette,
Laken Chessie, Jackson Cogswell, Lincoln Coleman,
Madisyn Dietz, Ethan Eichorn, Shayla Freeland, Elsee
Galvez Martin, Jaylice Gary, Dylan Gray, Clara Guidaboni,
Christopher Halla, Olivia Hunt, Cameron Johnson, Nathan
Johnson, Noah Kolodziej, Zoey Kus, Skylei LaPan,
Vaughn LaValley, Este Lemerise-Reinking, Emma Little,
Cole Marshall, Shayly Martin Ovalle, Anna Norwood, John
O'Malley, Yolvin Ovalle Mejia, Mario Pareja, Alyssa Peters,
Ariel Peters, Miles Riley, Aiden Sikoski, Alexis Smith,
Kailey Steiner, Kainen Stevens, Brooke Tirrell, Nathaniel
Trinque, Nathaniel Valle, Michael Waite, Naomi Wilson-Hill

SECOND HONORS
Aryanna Hale,
Nathaniel Kolakoski,
Talia Pederzini-Curtis,
Khalifa Seck

THIRD HONORS
Brody Girard

– Grade 8 –

FIRST HONORS
Starri Bell, Rayne Bonfiglio, Amelia
Bruso, Darian Burnett, Tatiana
Carr-Williams, Pamela Gomez, Ella
Guidaboni, Jacob Guillemette, Trent
Holst, Khia Huertas Hernandez,
Jacob Jurek, Madison Liimatainen,
Josiah Little, Jailyn Martinez, Sofia
Moreno, Emma Remick, Matthew
Richards, Linley Rollins, Alexander
Sabin, Isabella Spriggs

SECOND HONORS
Aiden Dodge,
Madison Fritz,
David Klemptner-Siano,
Jordan Rogers,
Zachary Zilinski

THIRD HONORS
Elizabeth Reipold

– Grade 9 –

FIRST HONORS
Ian Bastarache, Michael
Boyle, Reyli Galvez-Martin,
Fiona Hutchison, Logan
Johnson, Syna Katsoulis,
Aiden Kelly, Anne Kolodziej,
Ella Kolodziej, Audrey
Lapinski, Jasmine McNamara,
Holly Myers, Ella O'Keefe,
Ricky Pareja, Raygan
Pendriess, Jillian Reynolds,
Avery Tela, Jack Trombi

SECOND HONORS
Cameron Burnett, Kiri Corbin,
Trent Dobias, Andrew Janerico-
Fisher, Owen LaValley, Megan
Leveille, Joseph Mosca, Oliver
Postera, Nevaeh Sikoski, Deven
Sloan, Isabell Vachula-Curtis

THIRD HONORS
Kamryn Berry, Khrystina Gomez
Thorne, Taylor Greene, Owen Potts,
Jacob Reich, Gage Stanislawski,
Branden Truesdell, Derek Wissmann

– Grade 10 –

FIRST HONORS
Anna Baskowski, David
Damkoehler, Morgan Dobias,
Cloe Fulk, Luz Galvez Perez,
Mia Gonzalez, Abigail
Holloway, Madison LeBorgne,
Nikolas Martin

SECOND HONORS
Silas Koyama, Brayden
McCord, Levin Prondecki,
Haley Randall, Adeline
Riley, David Stowe, Tyler
Tetreault, Brooke Thayer,
Cadence Wozniak

THIRD HONORS
Ian Farrick,
Stephanie Peterson

FIRST HONORS
Dylan Burnett, Bryce Finn,
Britney Lambert, Jacob
Lyons, Jacob Norwood,
Kiley Palmquist, Brandon
Pollard, Olivia Stafford,
Paige Sulda, Emily Young

– Grade 11 –

SECOND HONORS
Aidan Bilodeau, Olivia Delisle, Brendan Driscoll, Oliver
Farrington, Jordin Muniz, Blake Pollard, Odalis Ramirez-
Martin, Dyllyn Russell, Chloe Sumner, Enman Villafana Abarua

THIRD HONORS
Anthony Kerivan, Maria Romashka, Genesis Stevens

– Grade 12 –

FIRST HONORS
Haley Bastarache, Vincent Carme, Isabelle
Farrick, Kris Fulk, Haleigh Greene, Isabella
Johnson, Natalie Kells, Audrey O'Keefe,
Catherine Reynolds, Marcus Sanders, Brynn
Tela, Jamie Thayer, Leah Timberlake, Jade
Tyler, Kaylin Voudren, Hailey Wheeler, Olivia
Whittier, Maralee Wiles, Cecilya Wood

SECOND HONORS
Xavier Chagnon, Morgan Pendriess,
Madison Sanders, Emily Sevrans,
Lana Spera, Enessa Stytsenko

THIRD HONORS
Ryan Duclos, Taylor Murphy, Dalver Perez,
James Robison, Yanle Robles Hernandez

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Montague Community Television News

This Week on MCTV

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – This week on MCTV, the Turners Falls girls basketball teams face off against Hopkins, while the boys play against Pioneer.

The Gill-Montague school nurses have created a video that details the new COVID-19 precautions that the schools will be requiring for reopening. Find the video, titled “GMRSD Covid GFMS TFHS,” on the MCTV Vimeo page to review the new mask wearing, hand washing, and symptom checking procedures required at all schools in the district.

There are also new videos of the police advisory committee meeting, the GMRSD school committee meeting, and selectboard and finance committee meetings.

All community members are

welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

The MCTV board is looking for new members, specifically someone interested in filling the role of treasurer. The station is also looking to hire a producer to make Spanish-language content. Please email infomontaguetv@gmail.com with a resume to schedule an interview!

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com.

MOVIE REVIEW

One Night in Miami (2020)



By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – It seems the people behind Amazon want to continue making original movies. The first one I saw, The Aeronauts (2019), I liked very much. I saw it twice when it was at my local theater. One Night in Miami I believe is the latest one by them, and it was all right.

The plot was two things: a setup that was probably more fitting for a play, and a scenario that you would expect a college professor to speak of, due to the famous people involved: Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Sam Cooke, and Jim Brown. These individuals are obviously well-known African Americans of the ‘60s, the era the movie is set in. Also, it is set in the aftermath of a fight won by Muhammad Ali where it was thought that he would lose. He went by Cassius Clay then.

One more fact about this is that it is based on a play of the same name by Kemp Powers. So I guess I was spot on to say the setup was more fitting for a play.

Another thing to say that was spot on – and impressive, in my eyes – are the historically accurate facts about these men that were included

in this movie. These included how Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X really were friends; a comment Malcolm X made about Kennedy being killed; Jim Brown leaving football to get into movies; the boxer becoming known as Muhammad Ali instead of his birth name at one point; and Malcolm doing a pilgrimage to Mecca like a Muslim is supposed to do.

The men end up talking with each other about issues facing black men at the time. I wouldn’t call it a huge miss for a film. I assume people who have seen the film would agree with me.

Like I kind of pointed out with my thought about this plot seeming like something a college professor would speak about, it doesn’t really seem like a real-life happening. But to my surprise, it is one. I did an internet search to double-check if the friendship between the boxer and Malcolm X was a real thing, and found this out. These four men really did somehow converse together on the night of that fight, and then celebrated with each other.

I believe I said in something else I wrote that sometimes a story is so incredible that you can’t believe that it’s true. But it is. I wonder if anyone would agree with this thought.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Vapors; Snow; Ongoing Barking On Grove Street; Stolen Rental Car; Agitated Males; Drunk Driver: It’s As If Everything Was Back To Normal

Monday, 2/8

10 a.m. Officer placed call to owner of a Millers Falls Road property re: town bylaw violation (snow removal). Owner called back advising he has someone who is supposed to clean it but since they have not done that; he will make sure it gets taken care of.

10:56 a.m. Officer served a Madison Avenue property owner with a town bylaw violation notice (snow removal).

7:21 p.m. Report of tractor-trailer truck parked on L Street with its door open on the road side. Officer located truck; door was not open.

Tuesday, 2/9

3:18 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports a chemical odor in his apartment; stated his neighbor is intentionally trying to poison him with something from downstairs. Officer spoke with involved male. No answer at downstairs apartment. No indication of any chemicals or odors. Party advised to work with landlord on issues and contact MPD back if anything further is needed.

8:26 a.m. Caller sent a complaint to the town administrator who forwarded it to Chief Williams about an ongoing barking issue on Grove Street. Officer investigating.

1:09 p.m. Caller states that road conditions are not good and DPW needs to head out and start plowing or there will be multiple accidents. DPW contacted.

1:23 p.m. Caller from Sunderland Road states that cars are not able to make it up the hill by his house and that some vehicles are backing down. DPW advises they are out.

1:41 p.m. Officer out on Montague City Road with a car off the road.

2:02 p.m. Officer out with vehicle stuck on the hill on L Street. Officer able to get vehicle up hill.

7:54 p.m. 911 caller from Unity Street reporting an intoxicated male is yelling at everybody and being aggressive, refusing to leave. Verbal argument mediated by officers.

Parties agreed to separate for a while and work things out.

Wednesday, 2/10

9:51 a.m. Caller from Highland School Apartments reporting stolen rental vehicle; states that this morning Enterprise contacted him and said that his vehicle had been in an accident. When caller contacted the state police, he was informed that the vehicle crashed on or near Exit 3 in New Haven and was totaled. Caller states he parked the vehicle at his residence last night, did not allow anyone to use the vehicle, and that the keys were last seen in his apartment but he does not know where they are. Report taken.

10:43 a.m. Report of harassment at Powertown Apartments. Advised of options.

11:30 a.m. Delivery truck stuck behind locked gate on Migratory Way. Services rendered.

6:28 p.m. Caller would like to speak to an officer about a vehicle she sold to someone but feels like they took advantage of her. Advised of options.

Thursday, 2/11

9:54 a.m. Report of suspicious vehicle with one occupant parked on Randall Road for at least five or ten minutes. Officer checked on vehicle; owner/operator advised she was making a phone call after dropping her husband off at work.

2:45 p.m. Report from Avenue A of another tenant in the building screaming in the hallway and banging on the walls and on another apartment’s door. One of the walls belongs to the caller’s apartment. Caller advises party was doing this last night as well. No answer at door; disturbance ended prior to officer’s arrival. Officer spoke with residents and will follow up tomorrow.

5:58 p.m. Caller states she is a personal care assistant and went to do a home visit when her client’s son started acting aggressively and made her feel unsafe. Requesting officer respond to check wellbeing of her

client and speak with the son. Officer reports all parties are OK; male was agitated but cooperative. Caller advised of options.

6:17 p.m. Male party states that his girlfriend has locked him out of the house and is refusing to let him back in to gather his belongings; requesting officer assist with mediating the situation. Party staying in his vehicle for the night.

Friday, 2/12

4:44 p.m. Report of erratic operator who just passed the Farren heading towards downtown Turners. Officer checked area; vehicle gone on arrival.

8:25 p.m. Report of three kids jumping out at cars and playing in the road by the golf course. Officer located group of kids by Cumberland Farms. They were walking in the road and advised that they weren’t jumping out at cars. Advised of complaint.

Saturday, 2/13

12:06 a.m. Caller from Montague City Road states that his upstairs neighbor has kids running around banging and making noise; states this is an ongoing issue and has been occurring all week. Officer called neighbor to advise of complaint; no answer.

6:31 p.m. Shelburne Control took a report of heavy smoke in the Millers Falls area that can be seen from 25 French King Highway; requesting officer investigate. Officer located fire on Millers Falls Road; confirmed with TFFD that they have a burn permit. Officer states fire was under control. TFFD advised. Reporting smoke in South Prospect Street area; investigating. TFFD located working fire on South Prospect Street. Shelburne Control striking first alarm. TFFD cancelling alarm; states it used to be a structure but is now just a large fire. Unpermitted burn of a trailer. Officer advised. TFFD extinguishing fire.

10:23 p.m. Report of loud party happening at Moltenbrey Property.

Officer spoke with party; advised they will turn the music down.

Sunday, 2/14

11:46 a.m. Report of two vehicles stopped in the middle of Route 2 in Erving; appears as though they may be about to engage in an altercation. Conferenced with Shelburne Control.

8:15 p.m. Erving PD requesting assistance with an uncooperative male who was called on for a well being check.

8:29 p.m. Caller from Whitney Way believes two Amazon packages were stolen from his mailbox today. Report taken.

10:01 p.m. Report of a car full of kids making a lot of noise behind Hillcrest Elementary. Officer made contact with involved party who states that he and his friends are playing Man Hunt. Moved along.

11:19 p.m. Caller from Moltenbrey Property states that her neighbors are playing very loud music. Officer reports apartment mostly quiet upon arrival; could hear the TV. Advised of complaint; stated they will turn the TV down.

Monday, 2/15

2:50 p.m. Report of vehicle that tried to go around the railroad arm in Erving at the crossing near Prondecki’s; narrowly avoided being struck by a train, but clipped the crossing arm. Crossing arm broke and train ran it over. Referred to Shelburne Control.

8:07 p.m. Caller states that there is a vehicle that appears to be stuck in the grass area near the Griswold Street parking lot of Hillcrest Elementary School. Officer attempted to make contact with vehicle owner; no answer at door. Field sobriety tests not conducted; male party refused. Male party now in custody. Officer made contact with vehicle owner, who was unaware that the male party had the vehicle. A 33-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor or .08%, second offense; operating to endanger; and operating a vehicle with a license suspended/revoked for OUI.

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BONNETS from page B1

their children. To date she has sold over 10,000 bonnets to customers from all over the US, and even as far away as Sweden and Australia!

There are many reasons for the business’s success. To begin with, it is truly a family affair. Keefe named the business “Sweet As April” because her son was born in the month of April. Her daughter Leia has been featured modeling many of the bonnets on Instagram, as well as products from other online shops, and has 17,000 followers. Her husband Marc manages the household and is an all around support to Keefe and the business, helping with accounting and other aspects of bonnet creation.

Her mom Christine trims the bonnets, and, according to Keefe, she has an amazing eye for finding vintage materials and embroidery for the bonnets. It has been a pleasure and a source of great pride, says Christine, to help and to watch her daughter bring her vision to life.

Last, but hardly least, Arleen, a longtime friend of the family and a master seamstress, ensures that each bonnet is incredibly well constructed and fits to a tee.

Sweet As April is also a unique business model,



Carrie Keefe poses with her daughter, Leia, seen here wearing a Sweet As April bonnet.

part of a growing community of small online shops. The entire business was born and has grown entirely on Instagram, Facebook, and the internet. There is no brick-and-mortar store to visit. Keefe has a studio on Avenue A where she stores material and does much of the design work, but the bonnets are constructed by Christine and Arleen in their home studios in Chesterfield, then shipped from Turners Falls.

The business creates and sells from 100 to 175 bonnets each week, in sizes that run from infant to four-year-old toddler.

Keefe is passionate about this business, and she absolutely loves what she is doing. She notes that all of her training, talents, and skills as an artist and business owner and her environmental concerns come together in the creation and sale of her bonnets.

According to the Sweet As April website (www.sweetasapril.com), one important mission of the business is to offer an alternative to the world of fast fashion. All of the bonnets at Sweet As April are made from donated, pre-loved or up-cycled materials, from tablecloths to vintage linens, thus reducing textiles in the waste stream one bonnet at a time.

Keefe mentions that she was once accused of not really using upcycled materials in her creations. She says she was quite shocked that anyone would think that but realized it was a blessing in disguise. She understood that the more transparent and honest she was with her customers about the process, the more her following would grow. It also prompted her to create a “before and after” video feature on the material used, which has become quite popular.

It appears that many of her customers share her environmental concerns and are drawn to her business because of that mission. As one customer pointed out, “Not only are Carrie’s bonnets the sweetest accessory to any outfit, knowing that they are made from vintage and preloved fabrics makes them a conscious, environmentally friendly purchase.”

Others love Keefe’s personal business style and the fact that it’s a family business. According to one bonnet enthusiast, “Carrie is an awesome person who puts her heart and soul into her bonnets. She uses preloved fabrics and that is much better than buying anything mass produced by far! And her family is wonderful! Supporting them is a joy.”

Keefe has built this business through collaboration with other makers and small shops who have online followers. They share pictures of their children wearing or using each other’s products with potential customers on each other’s feeds. Many bonnet fans also participate in online chats about these products as well as other aspects of their lives. To date, Sweet As April has a following of 124,000 on Instagram.

“I think what makes Sweet As April stand out from the crowd is that we really aren’t just creating heirloom quality baby hats, we’ve grown a community of

LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on February 17, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Leverett Takes First Steps
Toward Last-Mile Internet

Leverett moderator Gary Gruber called a quorum at two minutes past seven, saying it was the first time he could remember getting a quorum so early for a special town meeting.

Perhaps the warrant article to speed the creation of a municipal cooperative to provide home hook-up for high speed internet service had something to do with the crowd.

Article One, which would allow the selectboard to create “a municipal lighting plant for all purposes allowable under the laws of the Commonwealth, including without limitation the operation of the telecommunications system,” was called “dear to us all” by the moderator.

Peter d’Errico said the vote on Tuesday was only a first step, and was not about the nuts and bolts but about creating the institutional structure to provide universal high speed internet access.



Voters stood in line to cast paper ballots, and when the votes were counted the decision was unanimous in favor of passage.

Usher Mill Boiler Building
May Come Down

Usher Mill re-use committee member Linda Downs-Bembury reported to the Erving selectboard on February 10 that Bob Leet of Whetstone Engineering has inspected the boiler building at the Usher Mill and would soon submit a report on its structural stability.

In discussing the potential to save and restore the 1918, 1,000-square-foot boiler room building among the rest of the arson damaged mill complex on Arch Street in Erving Center, selectboard member James Hackett said while it might be morally and historically responsible to save that building, it might not be economically responsible.

Selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo remarked he didn’t think it would be feasible for the boiler building to be saved. But he added, “Honestly, I would like to see the boiler building stay. I would like to see a microbrewery in there.”



THE AUTHORS’ CORNER: KAREN McMANUS

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy February! In today’s article I’m going to be reviewing *One of Us is Lying* and *The Cousins* by Karen M. McManus. Enjoy!

One of Us is Lying (2017) is about four students who attend Bayview High School: Addy, the homecoming princess; Nate, who is already on probation for drug dealing; Cooper, an amazing athlete who is hoping to go to the major leagues; and Bronwyn, who is planning on attending Yale for college.

All of these students mysteriously end up in detention one day, even though they didn’t do anything to receive it. Simon, who created a popular gossip app for Bayview High called *About That*, also ends up in detention, but he doesn’t make it out. Before the end of detention, Simon is dead, and Cooper, Addy, Nate, and Bronwyn are the main suspects.

This story was so, so good, and the ending was super surprising! It was definitely really, really scary close to the end though, so I would recommend this book to older kids or young adults.

This book was also really fun, because the novel is set up so you can see Addy, Nate, Bronwyn, and Cooper’s perspectives, so you can try to solve the mystery!

I was so excited after I read this book that I looked up the author on Instagram to see if there were any plans of making it into a movie. I was super excited to find out that they are making it into a TV series!

I don’t know exactly when it’s supposed to come out, but if you want to watch it, it will be on the NBC streaming service, Peacock. Chase Stokes, who played John B., the main character in *Outer Banks*, a super popular show on Netflix last

summer, is going to be in the *One of Us is Lying* TV show, which I am so, so excited about because I love *Outer Banks*!

The Cousins (2020) is about three cousins, Milly, Jonah, and Aubrey, who have never ever met each other, and have been invited to go to their Grandma’s island resort for the summer.

This is especially weird, because Jonah, Milly, and Aubrey’s parents were all disinherited by their Grandma around twenty years ago, and haven’t seen or talked to her since. What is even more mysterious is their parents never knew what they did to be disinherited – they simply got a letter from their Grandma’s friend, Donald Camden, saying, “*You know what you did.*” Milly, Aubrey, and Jonah’s parents all advise their kids to go, because maybe this trip will help them all be back in their Grandma’s “good graces.”

Once they get to the island, though, something is especially weird; their Grandma has been on and off the island since they arrived, and didn’t properly meet them until almost three weeks of them being there. Donald Camden is basically bribing them to leave the island almost as soon as they arrive, too.

This book was so amazing! I think I liked *The Cousins* a little bit better than *One of Us is Lying*, but they were both so fun and I definitely recommend reading both of them! It was super exciting to read, and Ms. McManus also included their parents’ perspectives when they were living on the island, which was really fun. This book was also a little scary, so I would probably recommend it to young adults, and not so much for little kids.

I hope you enjoyed this article! I emailed Ms. McManus’s publisher, and she said that Ms. McManus is writing a new book so she couldn’t do an interview, which is totally fine,



Two for one: Our correspondent hits the mystery novels!

since instead I got to review two of her books.

If you like *The Cousins* and *One of Us is Lying*, Ms. McManus also has two other books: *One of Us is Next* (2020), the sequel to *One of Us is Lying*, and *Two Can Keep a Secret* (2019). I got *Two Can Keep a Secret* in the mail today, and I’m so excited to read it!

I hope everyone had an amazing Valentine’s Day, and has a fun February break!

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

After we got home, schools were canceled for two days while Franklin County dug itself out from a storm that, according to the February 10, 1969 *Greenfield Recorder Gazette and Courier*, dropped up to 22 inches in some places. Even the mail was halted when trucks could not get to western Mass.

What got me thinking back to the memorable storm and Celtics win 52 long years ago was former Patriots quarterback Tom Brady's record seventh Super Bowl win on February 7. Accomplished at the unprecedented age of 43 over the favored, defending-champion Kansas City Chiefs in his first year with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Brady's latest Super Bowl title secured his status as the greatest quarterback, maybe even the greatest football player, of all time, not to mention one of the classic winners in any of North America's four major professional sports.

I have no qualms with any of that, and have in recent years been in Brady's corner regarding the debate over who was more important to the Patriots dynasty, Belichick or Brady. But when Boston talk-jocks Felger & Mazz anoint him as our No. 1 all-time, all-sport winner, it is clear to me that they're wet behind the ears and never saw Russell play. He isn't even Boston's greatest winner.

Although I am not questioning Brady's greatness, for my money, Russell is our greatest winner. The numbers speak for themselves. No one can match his career's 11 titles in 13 years. The man didn't have enough fingers for his championship rings.

During the years of Celtics glory with Russell, the 6-foot-10 center lost only two career best-of-seven playoff series. The first was a 4-2 1957-'58 finals loss to the St. Louis Hawks in which he barely played due to a foot injury. The second was a legitimate 4-1 defeat to Wilt Chamberlain and the Philadelphia 76ers in the 1966-'67 Eastern Conference finals.

Russell responded to that first loss with eight straight NBA titles, then avenged the loss to Wilt's Sixers with two consecutive championships before retirement. The proud Celtics warrior must have been insulted when experts had the audacity to crown the 1966-'67 Sixers as the greatest NBA team of all time after halting the Celtics' unparalleled streak of eight straight titles.

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Russell's Celtics dethroned those Sixers the following year by climbing out of a 3-1 hole to beat Philly in their best-of-seven 1967-'68 Eastern Conference finals before beating the Los Angeles Lakers in six games for the title.

Then, after a lackluster fourth-place Eastern Conference finish in 1968-'69, 35-year-old player/coach Russell took down the powerful Knicks and Sixers before outlasting the favored Lakers and new wunderkind Wilt Chamberlain with a Game 7 road win in Russell's final NBA game.

Russell is American sports' greatest winner, better than Brady, better than Maurice "Rocket" Richards – whose 11 Montreal Canadiens' championships matched Russell's total with the benefit of five additional years – and better than any New York Yankee. Brady has won seven Super Bowls in 20 seasons or, to be fair, seven wins and 10 appearances in 18 full seasons.

The remarkably durable Brady did not play as a rookie, and lost another season to a serious knee injury sustained in the season opener. Other than that, he answered the bell.

I feel fortunate to have witnessed

Brady and Russell, and bristle at the uninformed opinion that Russell's accomplishments are irrelevant because they occurred so long ago. Felger would have you believe Russell went back to the days of the two-hand set shot. It's not true. In my opinion, Russell would have been dominant in today's game, as would Hall of Fame teammates John Havlicek and Sam Jones, and opponents like Jerry West and Elgin Baylor, Wilt Chamberlain and Hal Greer, Willis Reed and Walt "Clyde" Frazier.

Remember, in Russell's day there were far fewer teams and also fewer "cupcakes" on an 82 schedule. Plus, because teams played each other so often, the rivalries were more intense than today.

I got to see Russell's greatness up close and personal that day of the 1969 storm. Having injured a knee against the New York Knicks a week earlier, he was questionable for the game. So, we were relieved upon learning by inside information that he was expected to play.

Our source was none other than Auerbach himself. How? Well, Henry Boron had tickets waiting

for him in Auerbach's desk, and his office was our first stop once inside rickety, smelly, old Boston Garden. Henry walked right into the office like he owned the place and left us seated in a narrow waiting room facing two or three pretty, long-haired teenage girls as he boldly rapped on Auerbach's door.

"Come in," we heard muffled from behind the closed door, and in went Henry, disrupting a meeting between Auerbach and then NBA Commissioner Walter Kennedy, whose daughters were seated across from us in the lobby. Henry soon emerged with a fistful of tickets for midcourt, courtside seats right behind the ABC announcers, compliments of the Celtics.

How could a teenage boy forget a day like that? It was surreal.

Anyway, the game itself turned out to be an overtime thriller, won by the Celtics, 122-117. Down 110-108 with three seconds remaining, the Celtics called timeout to set up a last-second play attempting to tie it. Remember, there were no 3-pointers then.

Coming out of the break, Havlicek was stationed near the ABC broadcasters for the inbound pass, which he lofted high toward Russell, jockeying for position in the paint with Sixers center Darrell Imhoff. Russell, who had already blocked two shots in the final minute, timed his jump perfectly, gracefully soaring over Imhoff for a two-hand slam to tie it 110-110 at the buzzer, sending the game into overtime.

It was classic Russell – 35 years old in his final season, no less. Favoring the sore knee, he came off the bench with his team trailing by 10 in the first quarter to lead the comeback win. He finished with nine points, three assists, and 23 rebounds, not to mention the late-game heroics, all on a tender knee.

The online box score shows Sixers' small forward Billy Cunningham (later Erving's Sixers coach) leading all scorers with 37 points and the Sixers with 19 rebounds. Chet Walker added 26 points, Hal Greer 16.

Boston was led by tireless

Havlicek's 31 points to go with 12 rebounds and seven assists. Sam Jones and Don Nelson added 24 and 21 points, respectively.

As was the norm in Russell's day, the Garden was about half full, with an announced paid attendance of 6,095. Who knows if our party was included? Maybe so.

Upon exiting the building for our car, the blizzard was roaring, the parking lot and vehicles buried under several inches of snow. First, we had to clean off the car and get out of Boston. Then we had to make it all the way home to South Deerfield. There were no guarantees, but we made it.

Three months later, on May 5, the Celtics and aging Russell bounced back from a 3-2 best-of-seven deficit to beat the host Lakers, 108-106, in Game 7 at LA's Fabulous Forum. It was the game of Don Nelson's famous 15-foot jump shot that bounced around the rim and took forever to drop through the net; better still, the game when overconfident Laker owner Jack Kent Cooke, buoyed by his new 7-foot-1 toy named Wilt, was unable to release thousands of celebratory balloons suspended high in the rafters for a postgame party.

Colored blue and gold with the words "World Champion Lakers" printed in bold, black letters, the balloons clung in nets to the ceiling as the jubilant Celtics celebrated their second straight title, both over LA, and their eleventh in 13 years. It was a fitting tribute to North America's greatest all-time sports winner – William Felton Russell – whose feats may be forgotten but will likely never be duplicated.

Russell didn't come to play. He came to win, and the man won like no other, including Brady, great in his own right but no Russell, no matter what blabbering talk-jocks Felgie & Mazz would have you believe. They've only seen the goateed No. 6 on YouTube and have no clue what they missed.

Such a dismissive attitude toward Russell's greatness is understandable. He never got a fair shake in Boston.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

At GCC: Artist Talk With Greta Rybus

GREENFIELD – The Greenfield Community College Art Department is hosting an online artist talk with Greta Rybus on Wednesday, February 24 at noon. Rybus is a photojournalist based in Portland, Maine. Her work investigates human relationships with the natural world, with an interest in documenting redemptive and reciprocal connections with nature. She has done editorial portraiture, travel, documentary photography, and other assignments for magazines and newspapers like the *New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *The Guardian*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Born in Boise, Idaho, Rybus studied photojournalism and cultural anthropology at the University of Montana. Her first book, *Handcrafted Maine*, about people in Maine working with art, land, and sea, is now in bookstores.

She has a goal to spend one month of every year



Maine photojournalist Greta Rybus.

living and photographing in a new place and is currently working on an ongoing project exploring how climate change impacts individuals and communities. Thus far, she has worked on the project in Senegal, Panama, Norway, and Idaho. She has lived in Japan, the Netherlands, the San Juan Islands, Montana, Seattle, the Sawtooth

Mountains, and Berlin, Germany.

Learn more at gretarybus.com, and join the artist talk next Wednesday: zoom.us/j/98131613995.



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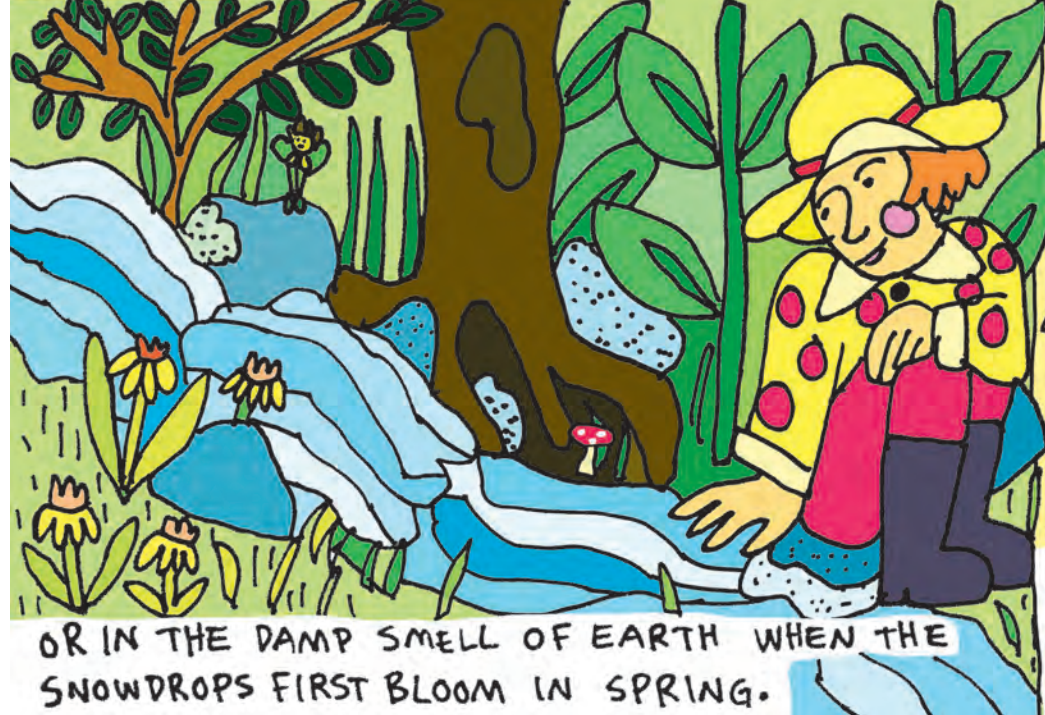
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ARTBEAT from page B1

shanty, which featured Black Lives Matter imagery, and “Best Storytelling” for “Ice Fishing Instances,” a simple shanty built from pallets and emblazoned with fanciful wood-burnt scenes by Jennifer Stofer and Cedar Van Tassel.

In the top three awards, “Most Artistic” went to Bruce Campbell, who fashioned a fish-shaped shanty of birch branches and clear film, and “Finest Craftsmanship” to Myles Danaher’s large black shanty painted like a die, with NASA images of full moons representing the die’s pips, or dots. The shanty door opens to reveal a fully cedar-lined sauna, with a heater run by a portable generator. Danaher said he plans to take the die up to a home he owns in Northern Vermont where it can be paired with an eight-foot cattle trough filled with cold water, completing the Finnish sauna experience.

“Best in Show” went to muralist Craig Roach, who, coincidentally, grew up in Turners Falls. Roach collaborated with sign-maker Peter Poanessa to build “Icy Hue,” using prefabricated gothic arches. The arches gave the shanty an elegant, sloping exterior, a high-ceilinged, roomy interior, and provided a large outdoor surface for Roach’s bold mural of a woman covering her face with her hands.

Roach said he was intrigued with the image because you have to guess at what the woman is feeling. Is she excited by something? Is she afraid?

“I’m generally a muralist,” Roach said. “And so that was the appeal of an ‘artful ice shanty.’ I thought, ‘Well, I’ve done plenty of murals, but to have a mural out on the ice would be a really interesting visual.’”

The only entry that actually was out on the ice of the Meadows was a working shanty built by longtime ice fisherman Steve Haisley of Putney. His shanty earned the award, “Most Likely to Catch a Fish.”

Related Exhibits at BMAC

After you visit the ice shanties, go warm up at BMAC and view two related exhibits, *Ice Shanties: Fishing, People & Culture* and *Erik Hoffner: Ice Visions*.

The first is comprised of large photographs by Columbian-born photographer and part-time Vermont resident Federico Pardo, who started documenting the shanties on the Meadows in 2016. The images

of the shanties, as well as some surprisingly beautiful still lifes of fish, are printed on aluminum, which imbues them with an appropriately frigid quality.

You can access accompanying interviews conducted by researchers from the Vermont Folklife Center by calling a number on your mobile phone. It’s great to hear the voices of these men (I heard only men, though I didn’t listen to them all) relate how one shanty was ingeniously fashioned from a truck cap found on the side of the road, for instance, or detail the innovative ways fishermen find to amuse themselves during the long wait. One group taped a friend’s chewing tobacco tin shut with electrical tape as a practical joke, then used it as a puck for an impromptu, and stickless, game of hockey played with their feet.

Many of the photos are long exposure shots taken at night, and the resulting starry skies impart a sense of mystery.

In the far gallery, Erik Hoffner’s *Ice Visions* exhibit takes mystery to further levels. These black-and-white photos are of the simplest imaginable composition – each focuses on one ice-fishing hole after thawing and refreezing – yet the cracks and bubbles and wavy shapes within each circle manage to evoke universes both macro and micro.

Some resemble exploding nebulae; others look like petri dishes alive with microbes. A few had the grace and seeming import of Japanese brush paintings; others were more like odd cartoons, squirming with comical, not quite comprehensible activity.

An accompanying video and an actual ice auger displayed on the wall provide interesting context but the photos exude their own, otherworldly strength that transcends the quotidian circumstances of their creation. I could have stared at them all day.

These two exhibits are on view at the museum until March 6. The ice shanties will be on the Retreat Farm grounds until February 28.

On Saturdays and Sundays, museum staff will be on hand and serving complimentary hot cocoa from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., but you’re welcome to view the shanties, and to walk, snowshoe, or ski on Retreat Farm trails, seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Masks and social distancing are required.

For more information, contact BMAC at (802) 257-0124, or visit brattleboro-museum.org, or retreatfarm.org




TRISH CRAPO PHOTOS



Top: Turners Falls native Craig Roach sits inside the roomy ice fishing shanty, “Icy Hue,” that he created with sign-maker Peter Poanessa.

Bottom: Artist Myles Danaher stands in front of his huge die shanty, which opens to reveal a functional sauna. Art teacher Rachel Mangan’s shanty, “Teacher,” can be seen in the background.

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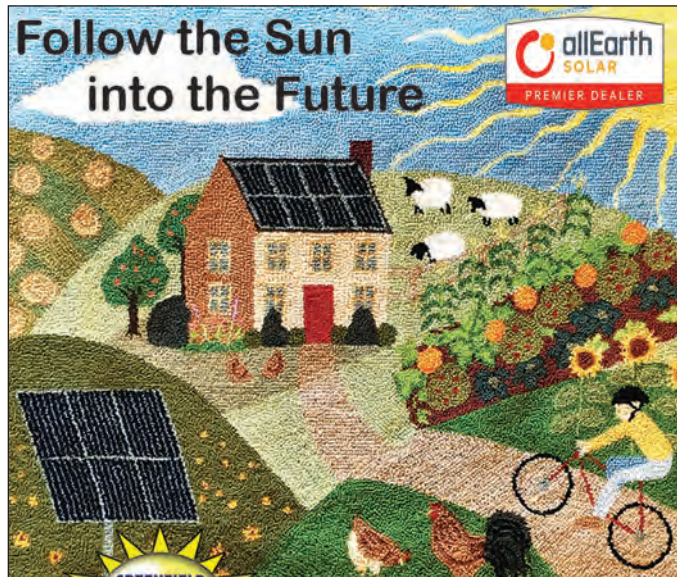


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